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ABSTRACT

Designed for use primarily by elementary school teacher and parent use, the book presents practical ideas and teaching tips. Each idea is presented in large print on a separate page, accompanied by cartoon-like illustrations. Suggestions begin with things to do the first day of school and progress through the last week of school. Examples of ideas included are: a classroom job chart, daily journals, various uses of the Guiness Book of World Records, school buddy systems, class mothers, student autobiographies, and field trips. The book also presents suggestions for handling difficult students, checking student papers, and creating bulletin boards. Many of the ideas can be used with any age, from nursery school to adult education. (LH)

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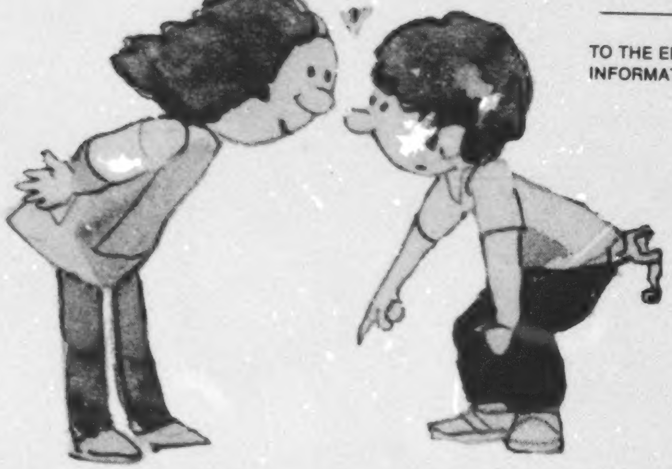

almost 100 ideas

for teachers (and parents, too!)

by Pat Horne Syvanen

illustrated by Malcolm Wells

SP 022 558

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Lovingly dedicated to

Bob Syvanen, my first husband
and the four great kids we raised -

Bob
Liisie
Richard
Ginger

- and all the great kids I've had the
pleasure of teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching? There's no such thing as teaching. Teaching is merely showing someone how to do something and then allowing her the freedom to do it. Many things affect her ability to learn, among which are: age, health, physical comfort, readiness, mental comfort.

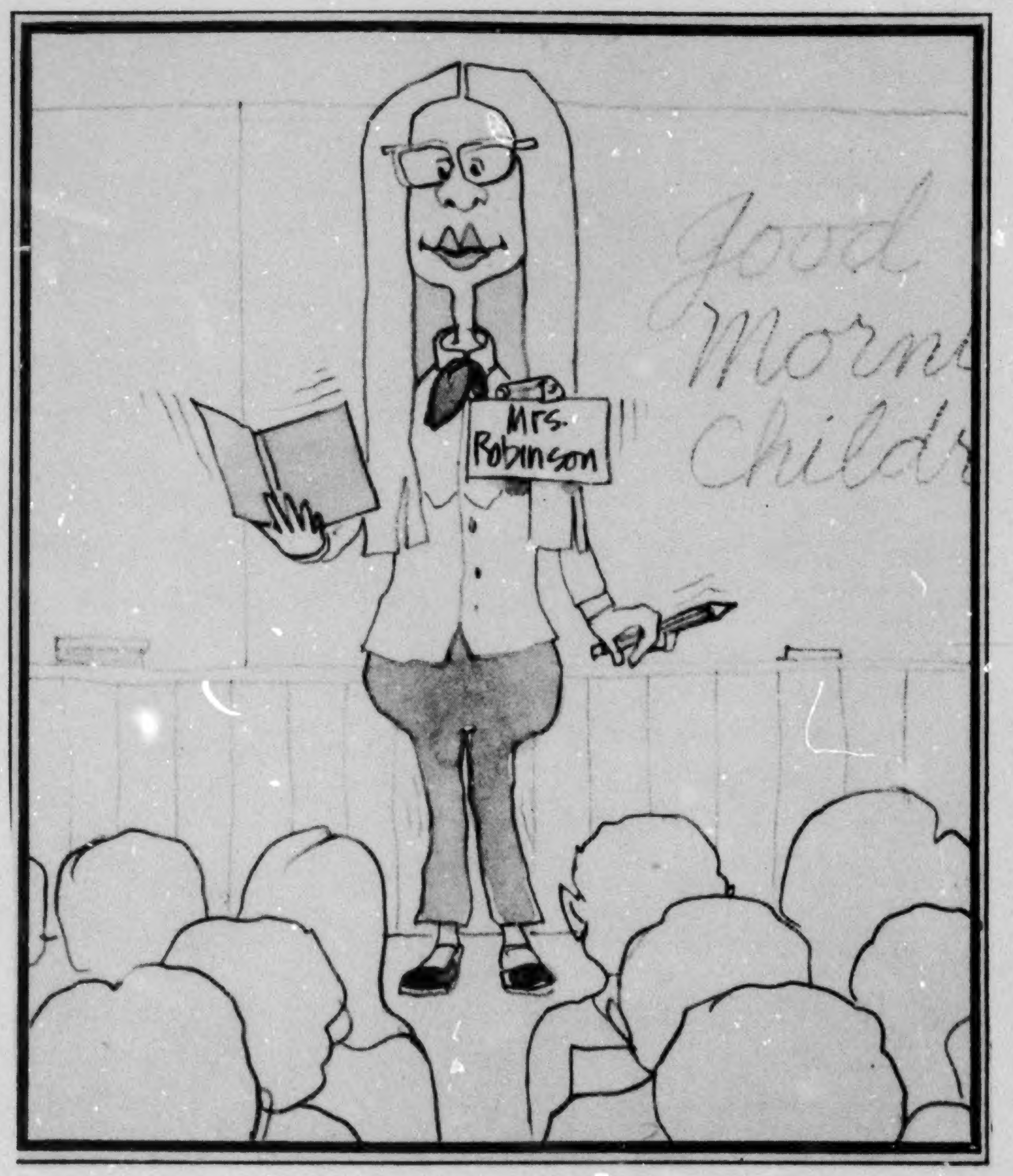
Successful teachers show something to a class, knowing quite well that some of the members of the class will immediately understand. Then comes the hard part: stepping back and allowing the understanders to show the non-understanders. Not only will the first learners reinforce their own knowledge, but the non-understanders will always tune in more clearly on what another kid is talking about than what a teacher, frantic to **TEACH,** is saying.

So, actually the function of a teacher is allowing a kid to learn in an environment conducive to learning.

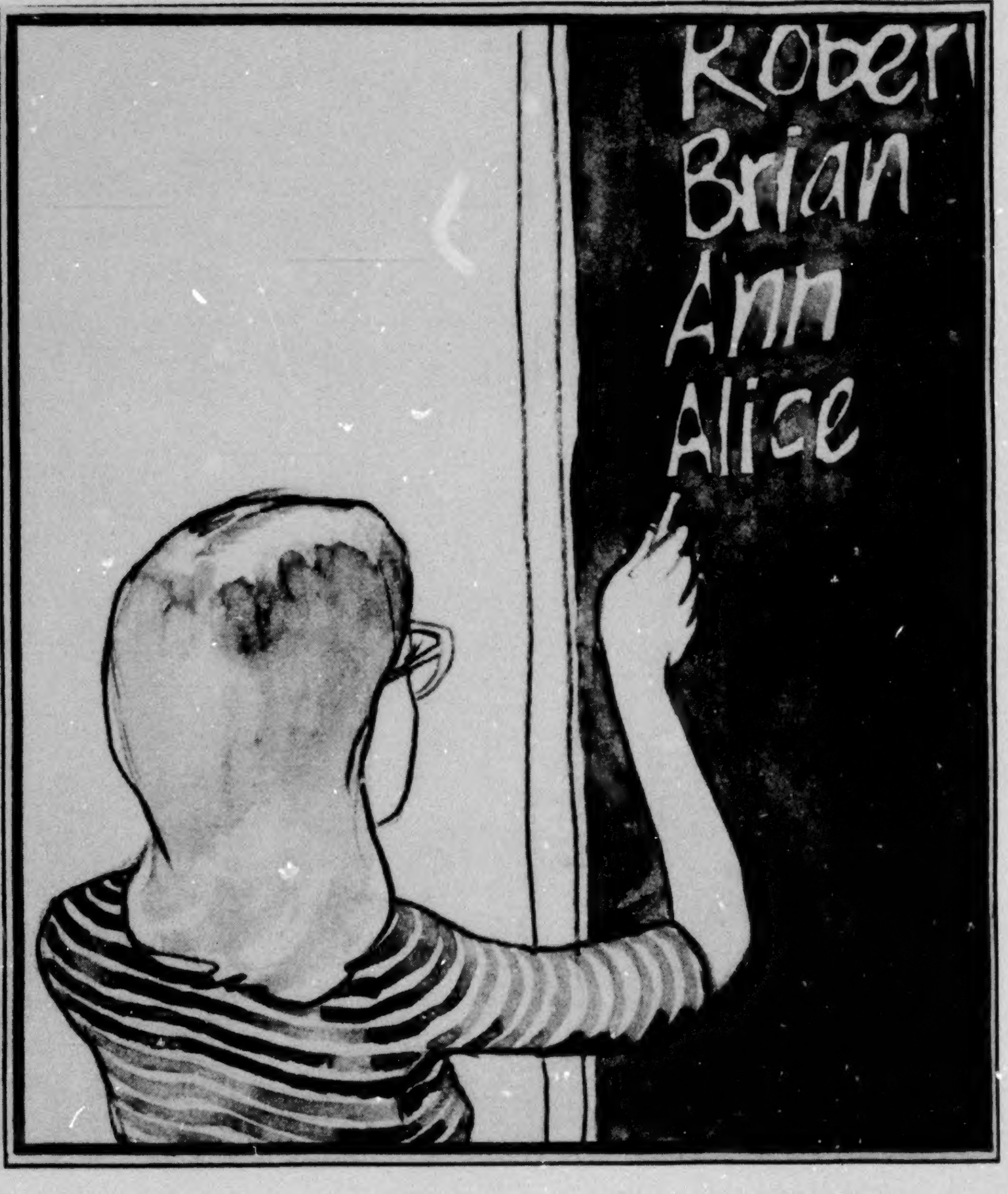
Some teachers are so involved with their subject matter that they will teach it, come hell or high water, and forget that they're teaching people, not subjects. This book is an attempt to help you put the kids first.

Some things I've done have really helped me as an educator. Now I'm passing them on to you because there is no one place where such tips are collected for teachers, and parents too, to use. Many of these ideas are valid at every age, from nursery school to adult ed. Most of them can be used at home too. For instance, we always measured our kids the first day of summer and the first day of winter, as well as on their birthdays.

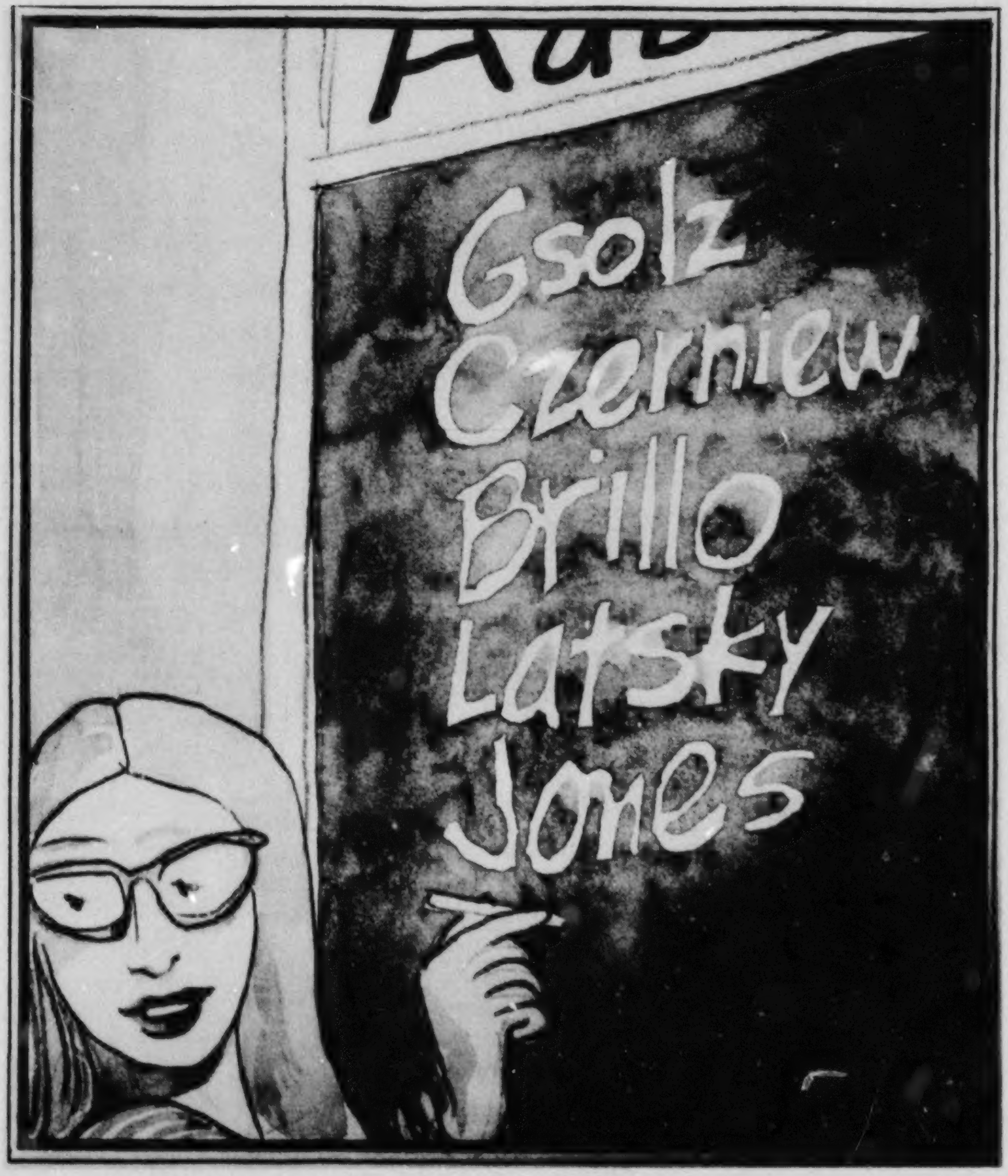
Here it is, the first day of school. This may be your first day of teaching in your own classroom, and there you stand, with knees knocking, as many pairs of eager eyes await your pearls of wisdom. But what do you do to start things off on that fateful **FIRST DAY**?


Good
Morn
Child
Mrs.
Robinson

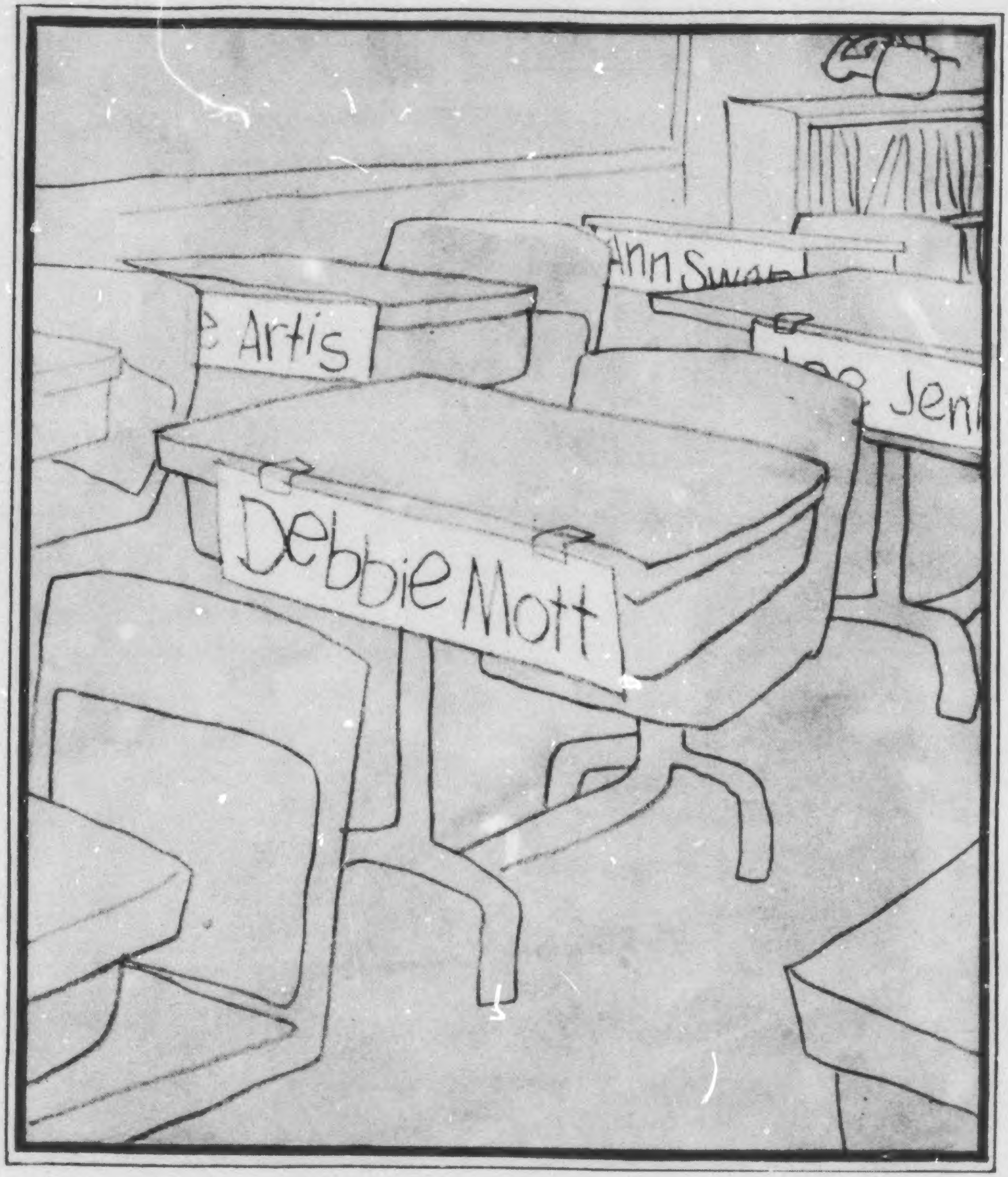
List all the first names of your students on the board. Have the class alphabetize them.


Robert
Brian
Ann
Alice

Then list all the **LAST** names of the students on the board. Have the class alphabetize them.

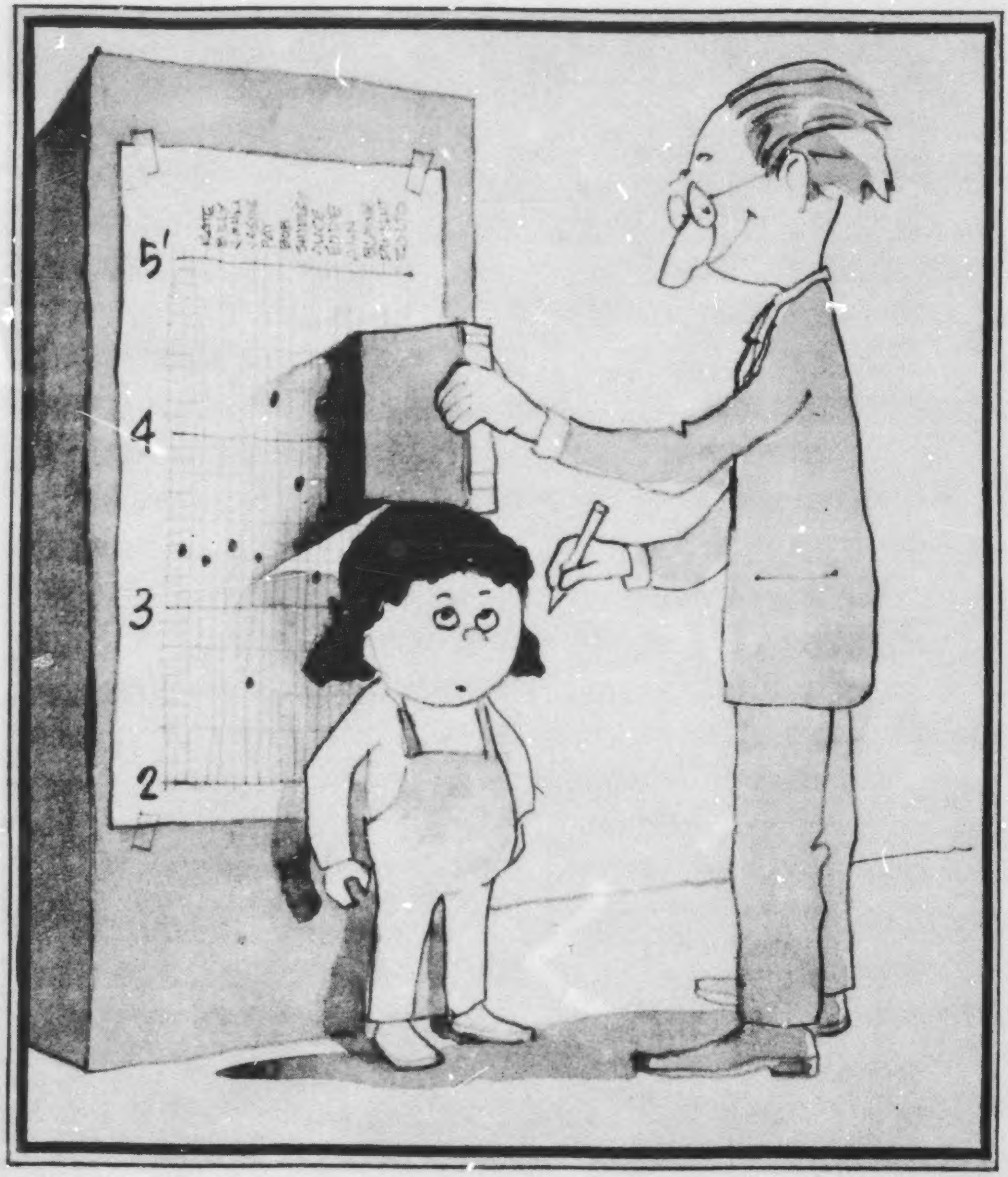

Gsolz
Czerniew
Brillo
Latsky
Jones

Hand out a large white paper to each student. Tell everyone to make a name sign, large block letters, please. It is to hang on each desk, a boon for you and a super boon to any substitute teacher or special teacher who comes to your room. It may be decorated around the edge, but be sure each name is legible.

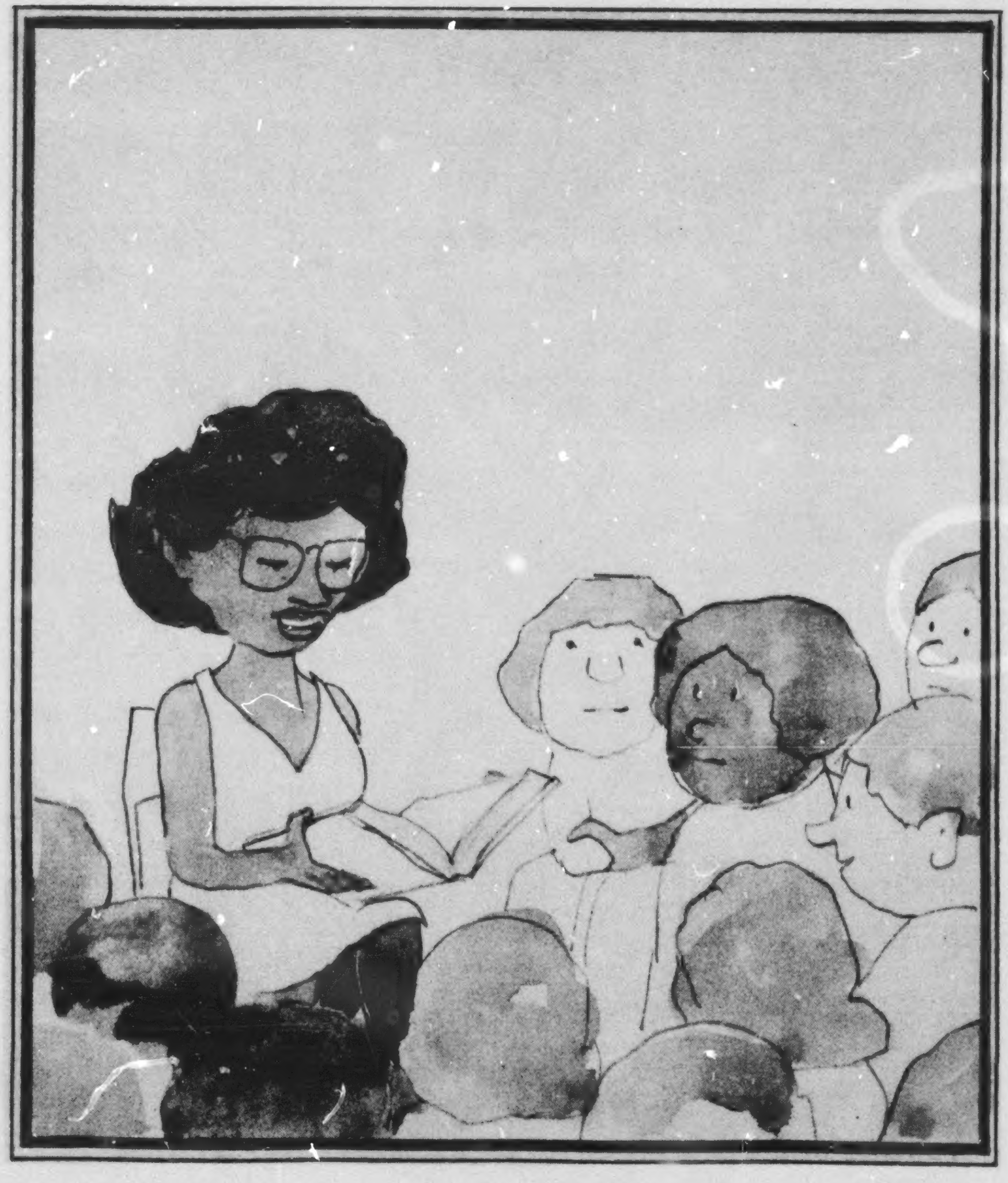


e Artis
Ann Swa
Lee Jen
Debbie Mott

While the name signs are being made, it's time to measure each kid in the class. Use a long piece of posterboard against a wall or cabinet with **NO** BASEBOARD! Have each kid remove shoes, use a book edge to hold horizontally against the wall, have the kid slide under the book, and mark with a red marker. Re-measure again before December holidays, and again the last week of school. This is a fine time to discuss how slow growth is, and how hard it is to actually see someone grow.


5'
4
3
2

Start reading a book immediately after recess the first day of school, one chapter at a time. Begin the year with a short book, then gradually switch to longer ones. Mysteries are popular, as are classics like **CHARLOTTE'S WEB** and **STUART LITTLE.** Kids who miss out because of absence will often borrow the book to catch up on what they've missed, or will ask classmates what happened while they were out.

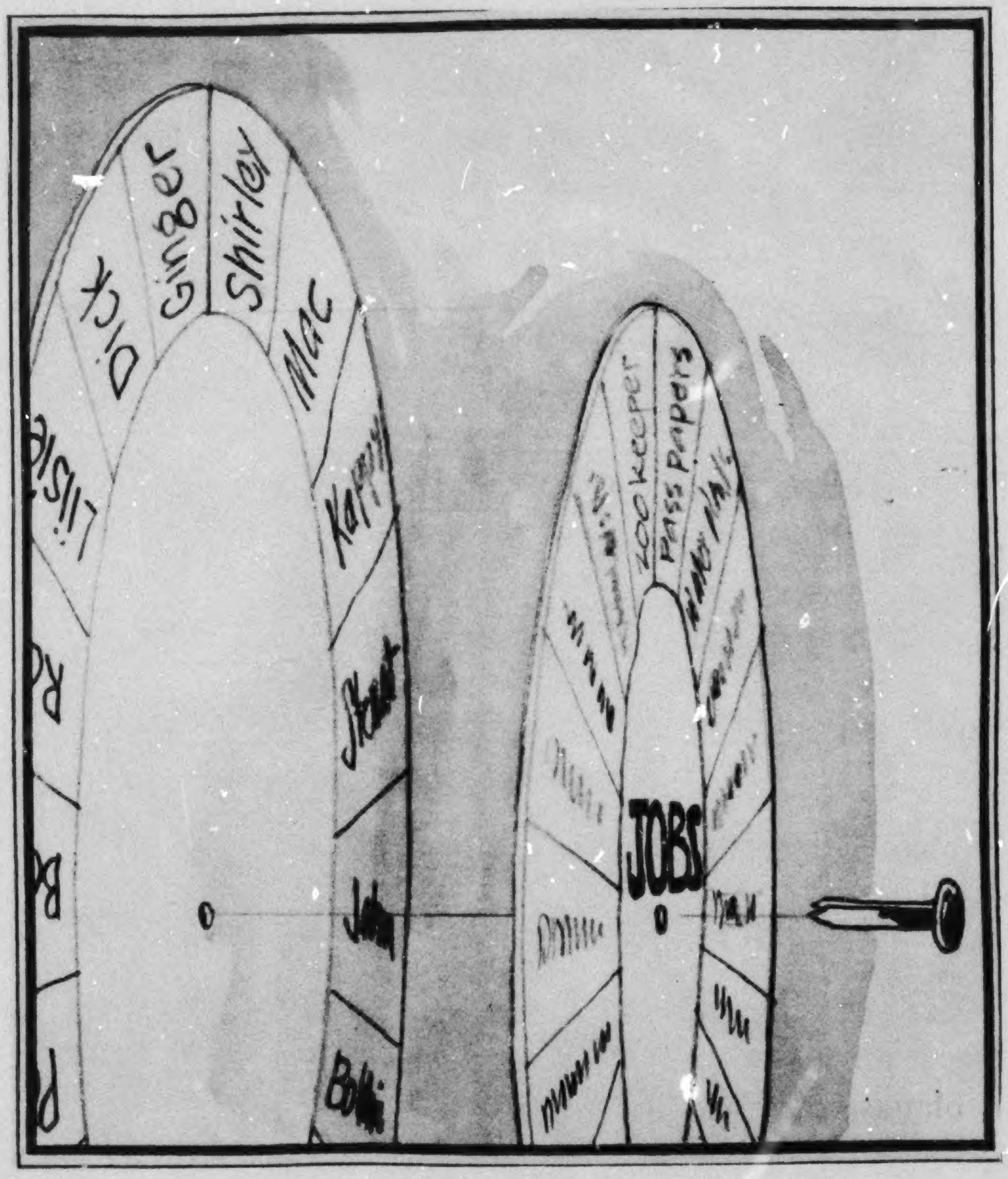


My most useful classroom aid is a **JOB CHART.** Made of sturdy posterboard, it consists of two circles and a paper fastener. Its size really depends on the number of students in your class, and you must allow a few blank spaces for new arrivals during the school year. The kids' names go along the outside circle, carefully measured with compass and protractor. The inner circle lists the jobs. Some that I've needed are:

water plants
pass paper
return papers
messenger
lights (on and off)
absentee's job #1
absentee's job #2

equipment getter
equipment returner
TEACHER'S PET (see page 24)
chalkboard eraser
book caretaker
zookeeper
waste basket passer

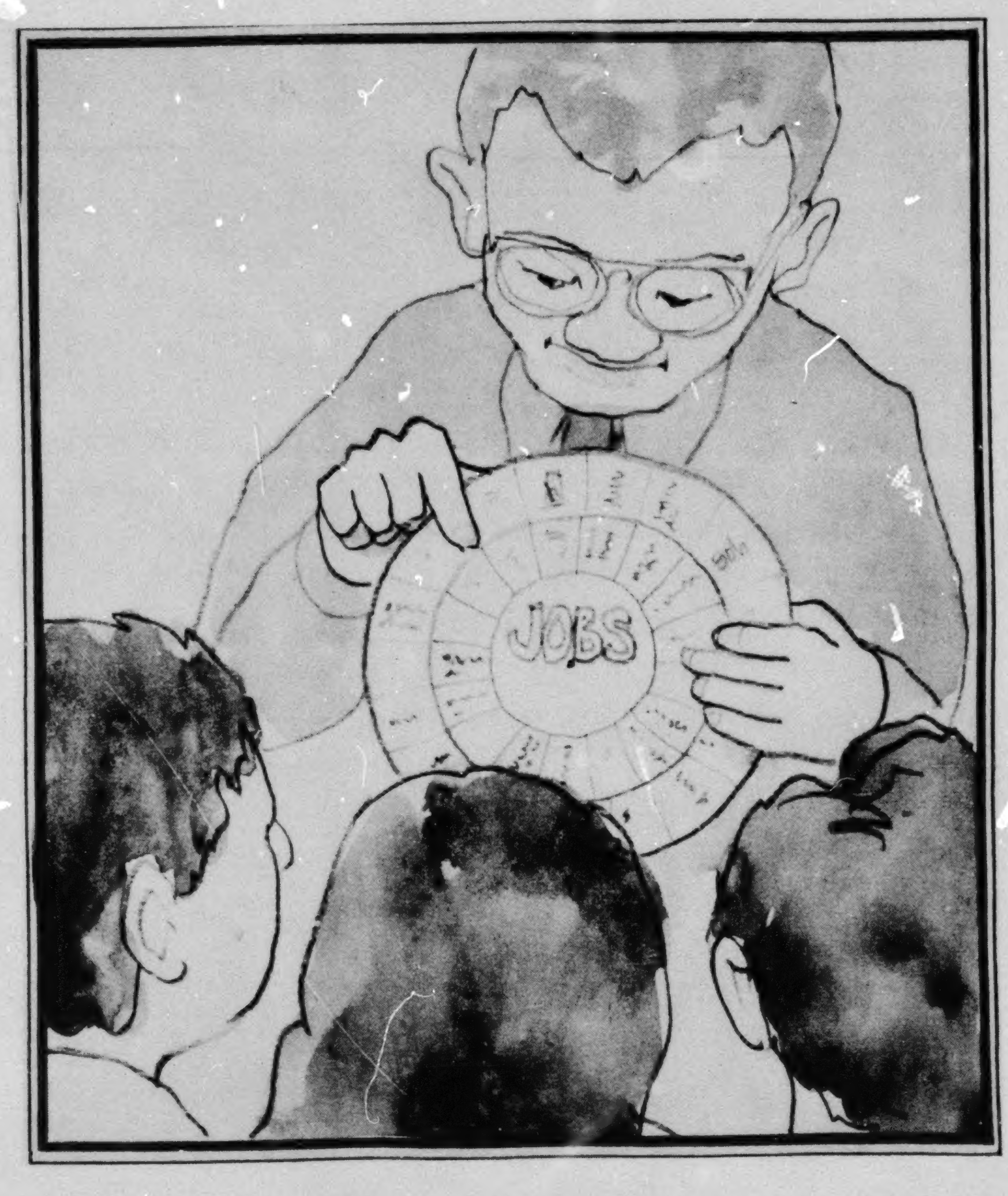
Each classroom has its own needs, so put any jobs that you think are necessary on your job chart. Leave a few blanks for future needs that will arise during the year.


Dick
Ginger
Shirley
Mac
John
Bobbi
JOBS
Zoo keeper
Pass Papers

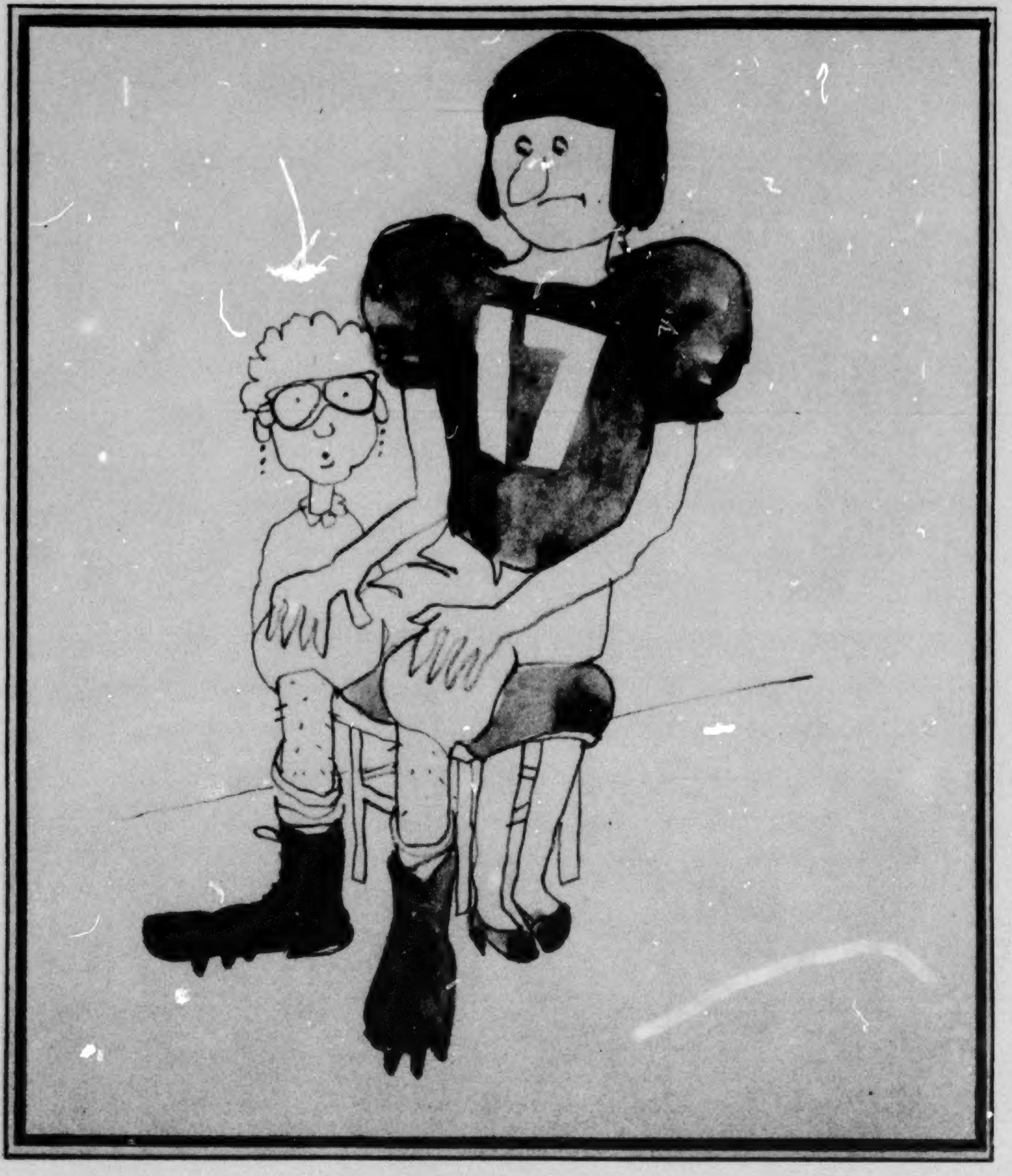
Explain each job to the kid assigned to that job **ONLY DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL.** Each kid is then responsible for teaching the next kid that job the following Monday morning. If taking something out of the classroom is the job,(lunch money, attendance sheet, etc.) make sure that the new jobber goes with the old jobber to the proper place. Collecting milk money, a time-consuming and awful job, is within the realm of some 5 and 6 year olds, but use two kids at a time to keep things organized. Any jobs involving collecting money should be done in pairs...checks and balances!

Move the job chart one place every Monday morning.

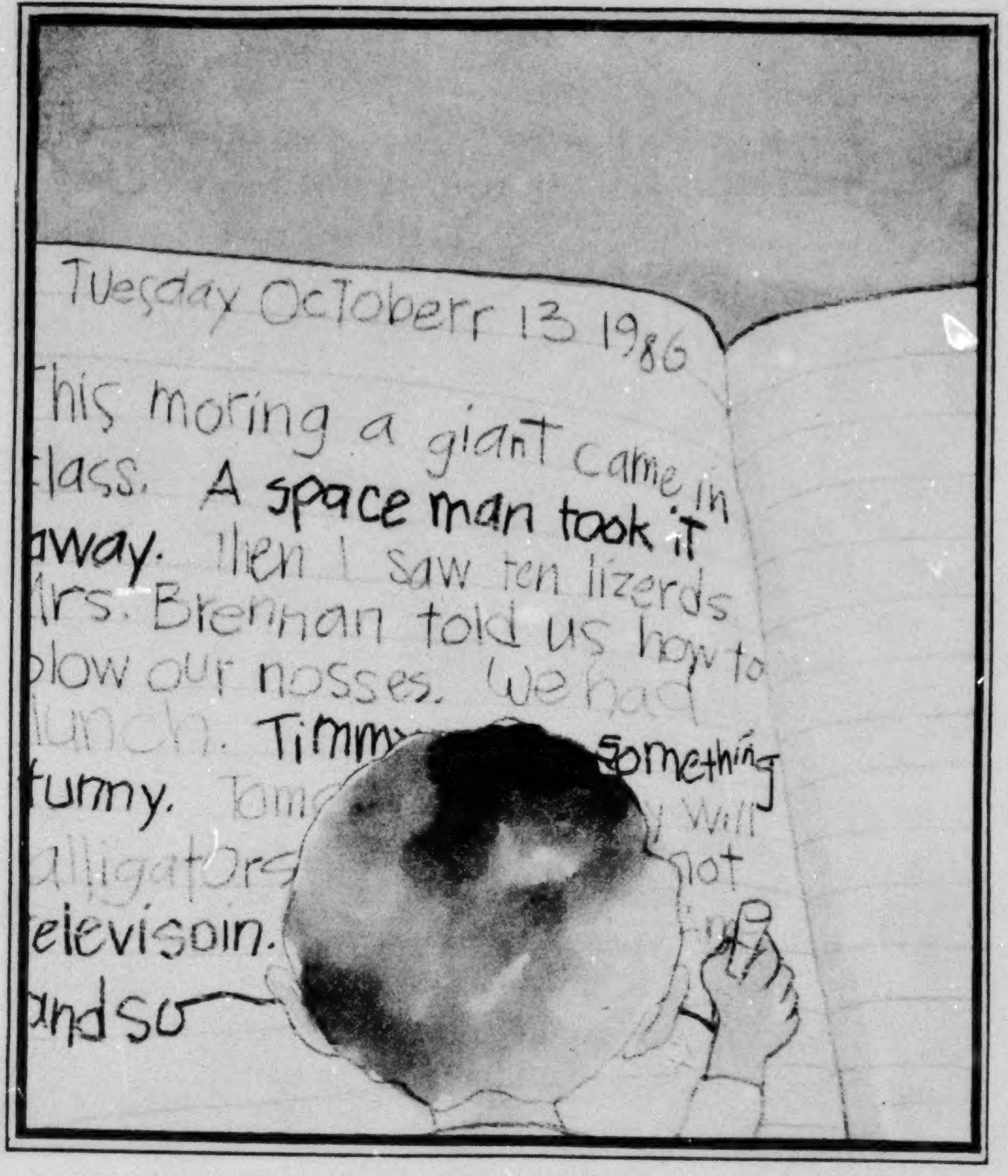
Skip around when setting up jobs so that you're not left with a bunch of blanks next to each other.


JOBS

TEACHER'S PET requires an explaination. The pet, after he has completed all his work, has the distinguished privilege of sitting on the teacher's lap (if he's in primary grades) whenever he wants to. Some kids hurry with their work to get some lap time: some kids don't need any lap time at all and never use it. Everyone must have the chance to have it. What a wonderful way to get to know your pupils! Older kids are given time just to talk to the teacher exclusively, although I've known 5th graders who still do need that lap time.

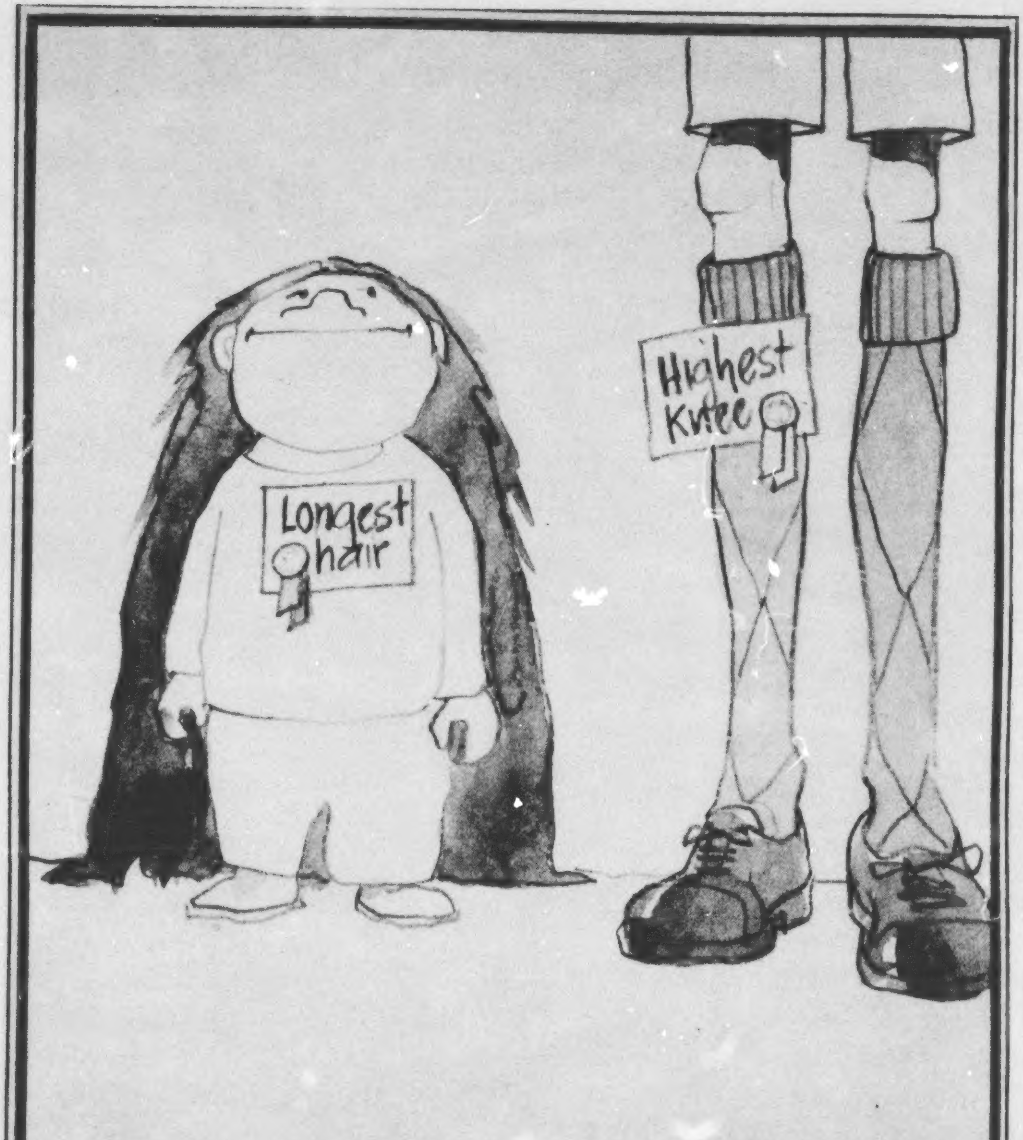

17

A daily journal, started the first day of school, sparks interest in what's happening in school. Use the last 10 minutes of each day to poll the kids on what happened in school that day, then let them write which event was important to them. After about a month, start the kids on their own journals, to write at home, but keep on with the class journal too. Some kids will be hooked on journals (and/or diaries) for life.

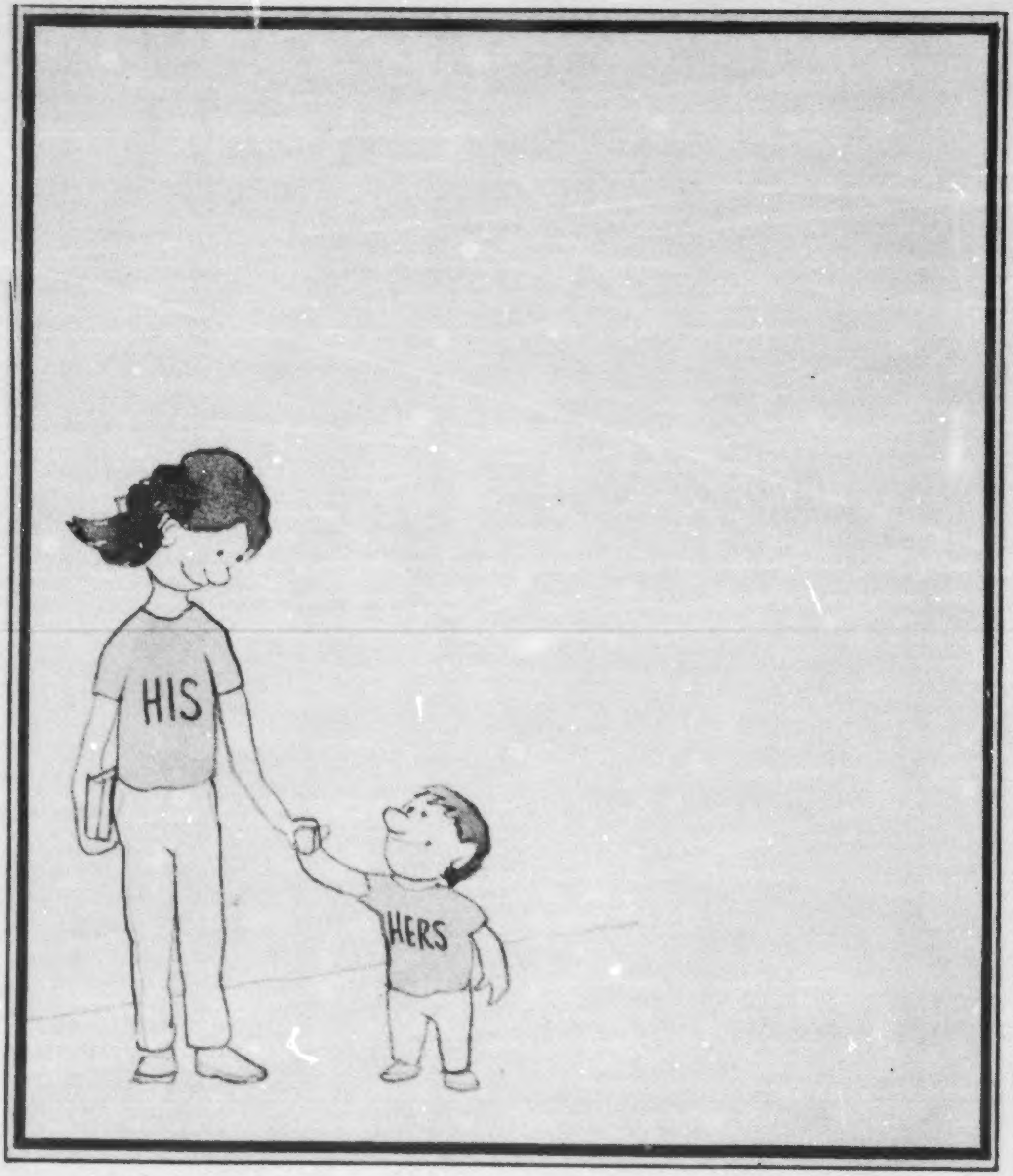

Tuesday Octoberr 13 1986
This moring a giant came in
lass. A space man took it
way. Then I saw ten lizerds
Irs. Brennan told us how to
low our nosses. We had
lunch. Timmy something
unny. Tom will
lligators not
elevisoin.
and so

One of the most popular books ever written for school kids is the **GUINNESS BOOK OF WORLD RECORDS.** The first day of school is a wonderful day to make up a record sheet for your class. After everyone's been measured, you can immediately decide who's shortest, who's tallest. Then, in order to make sure that **EVERY** kid gets in the record, toss out things like, ''Who has a bird for a pet?'' ''Who is wearing a red ring?'' ''Who has the most brothers?'' ''Who has the youngest baby at home?'' ''Who caught the biggest fish this summer?'' ''Who has on the widest belt right now?'' ''Who can speak a foreign language?''

Make copies of the questions you decide to use, and pass them to the kids as you go along, so they can fill in the information with you. Make a copy to post on your classroom door, one to go into the school library, and one to go home with each kid. Be sure to save a copy in your file as you'll want to repeat this at the end of the school year. The tallest may no longer be that, and the shortest might be in the middle of the class.


Longest hair
Highest Knee

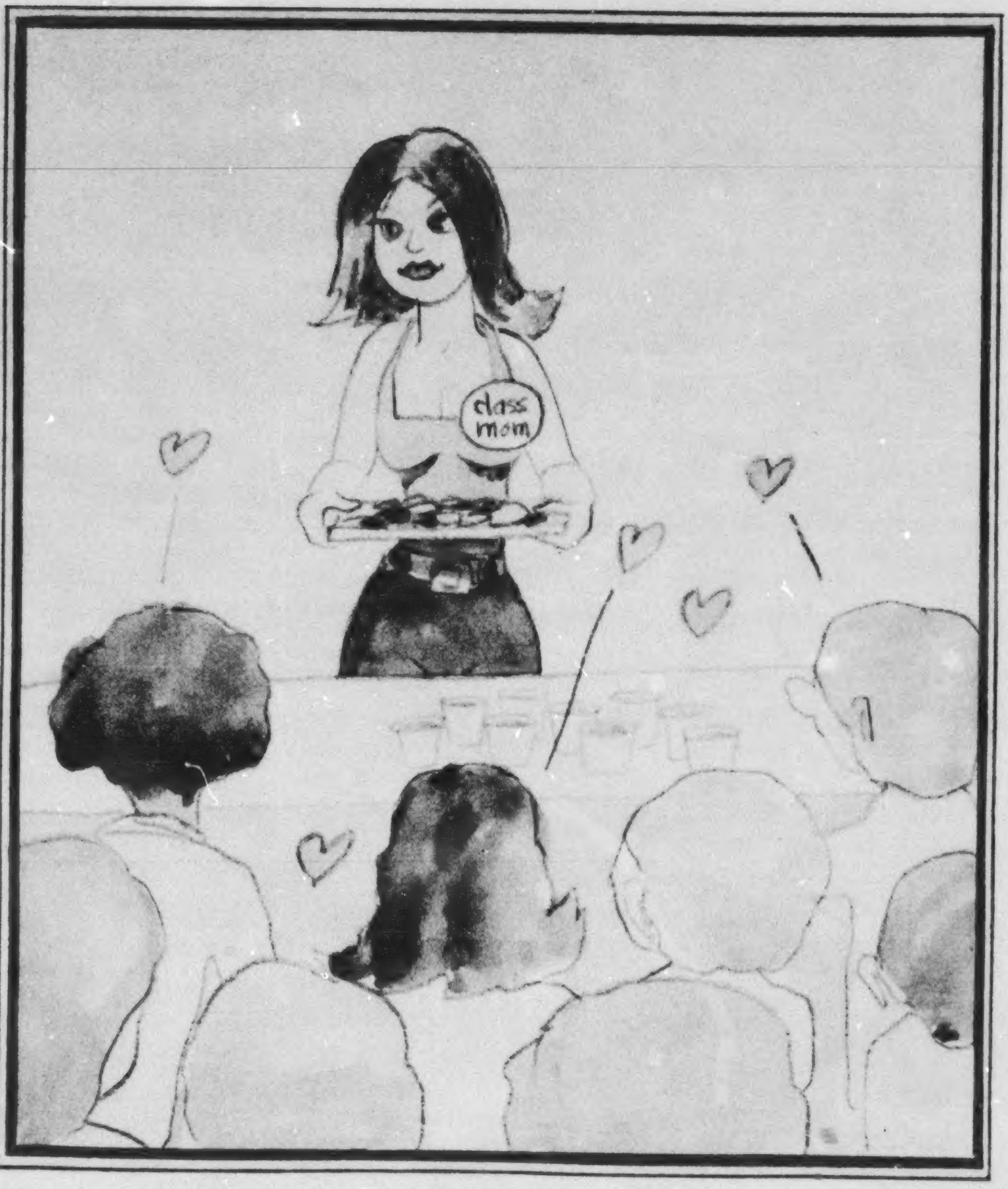
The school buddy system might be very helpful to little people when they first start school. To have a buddy in 4th or 5th or 6th grade who rides on the same bus when you're only in Kgn or 1st grade can make a big difference to someone going out into the big world after having been nurtured and protected at home. This must start the second day of school, and involves getting lists of who's on what bus circulated as quickly as possible to the teachers.


HIS
HERS

Class mothers are **WONDERFUL!** It's often difficult to find a willing class mother these days when so many moms are working, but do try!

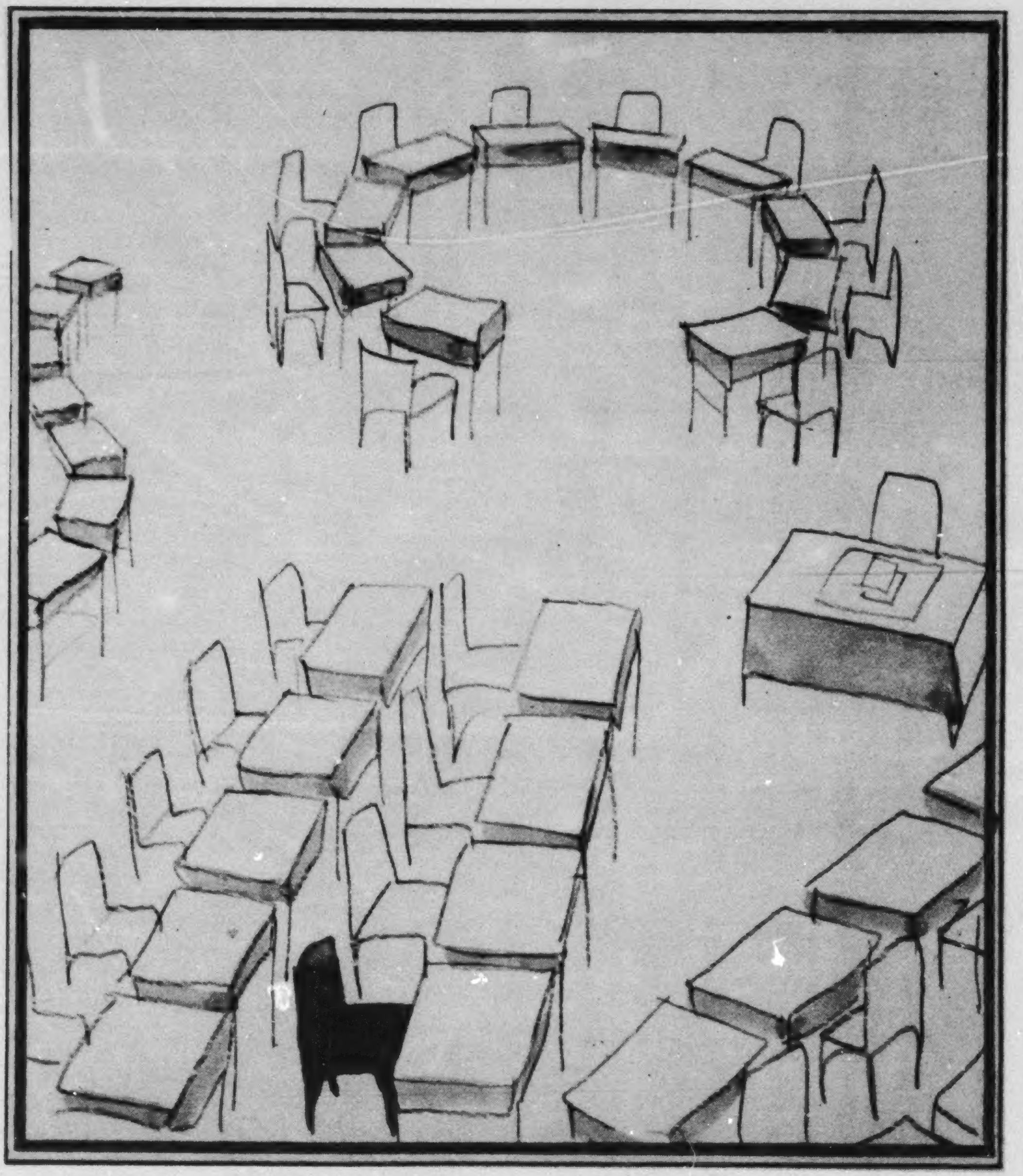
The official duty of a class mother is to be the communicator between the teacher and the parents of all the kids in the class. She is the one to call when you need punch and cookies for a party for Halloween. The burden of supplying things will not always fall on the teacher if there's a class mother. If you have trouble finding one, ask the kids who has a mom at home, and you'll find out in a hurry who's working.

Do use your class mother to find parents who might be available for field trips. One class father arranged a cook-out the last day of school. He brought a charcoal cooker and 4 mothers from the class to help things move along. The food was donated, and the teacher was spared the worry of making a fire and watching the kids too. It became an annual event, and is quite successful!

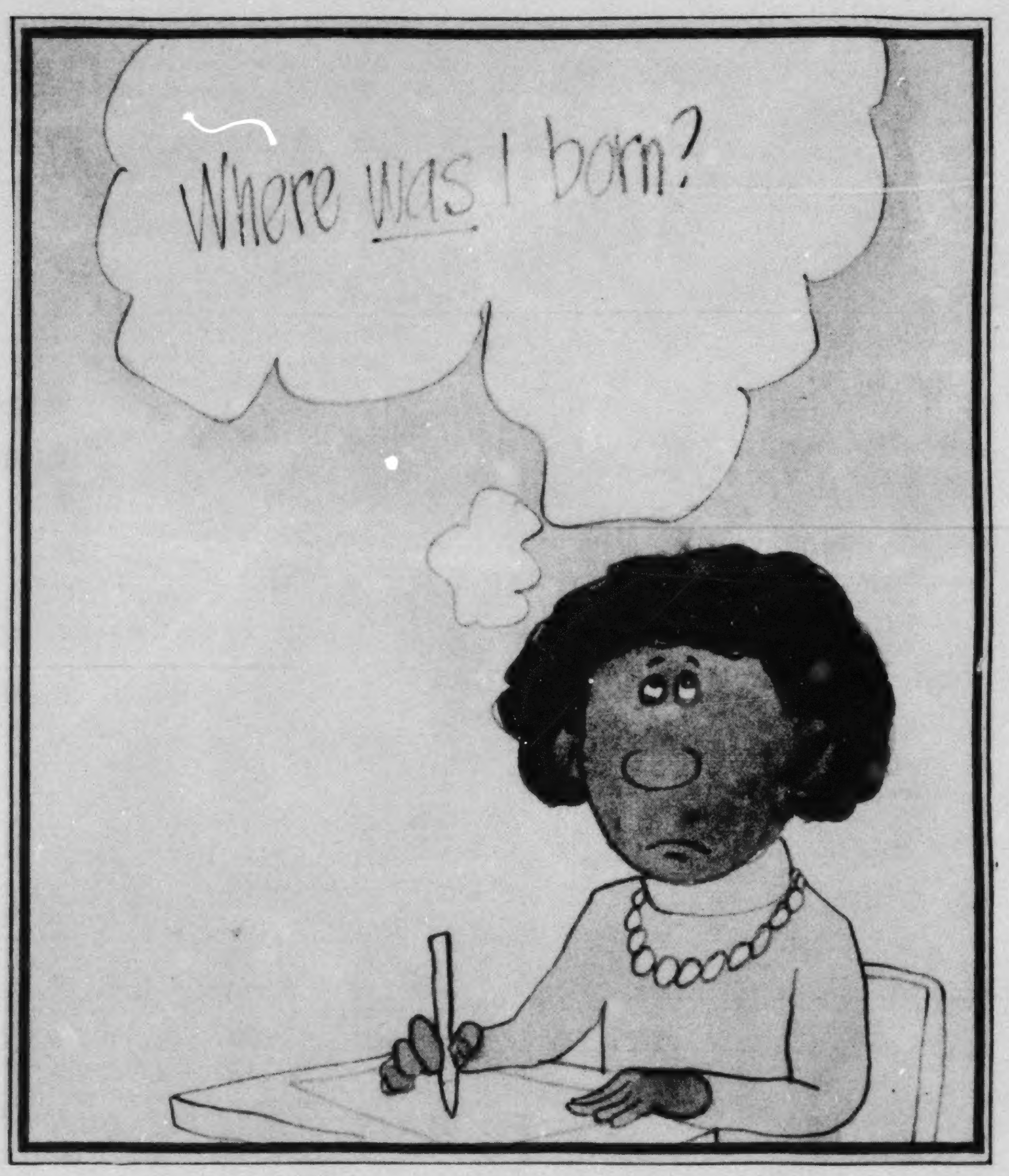

class mom

Must all desks be set up in straight lines? Of course not! How about circles? Or how about a courtroom arrangement? Or how about hexagons? Or pentagons? Or lots of small clusters of four, or six?

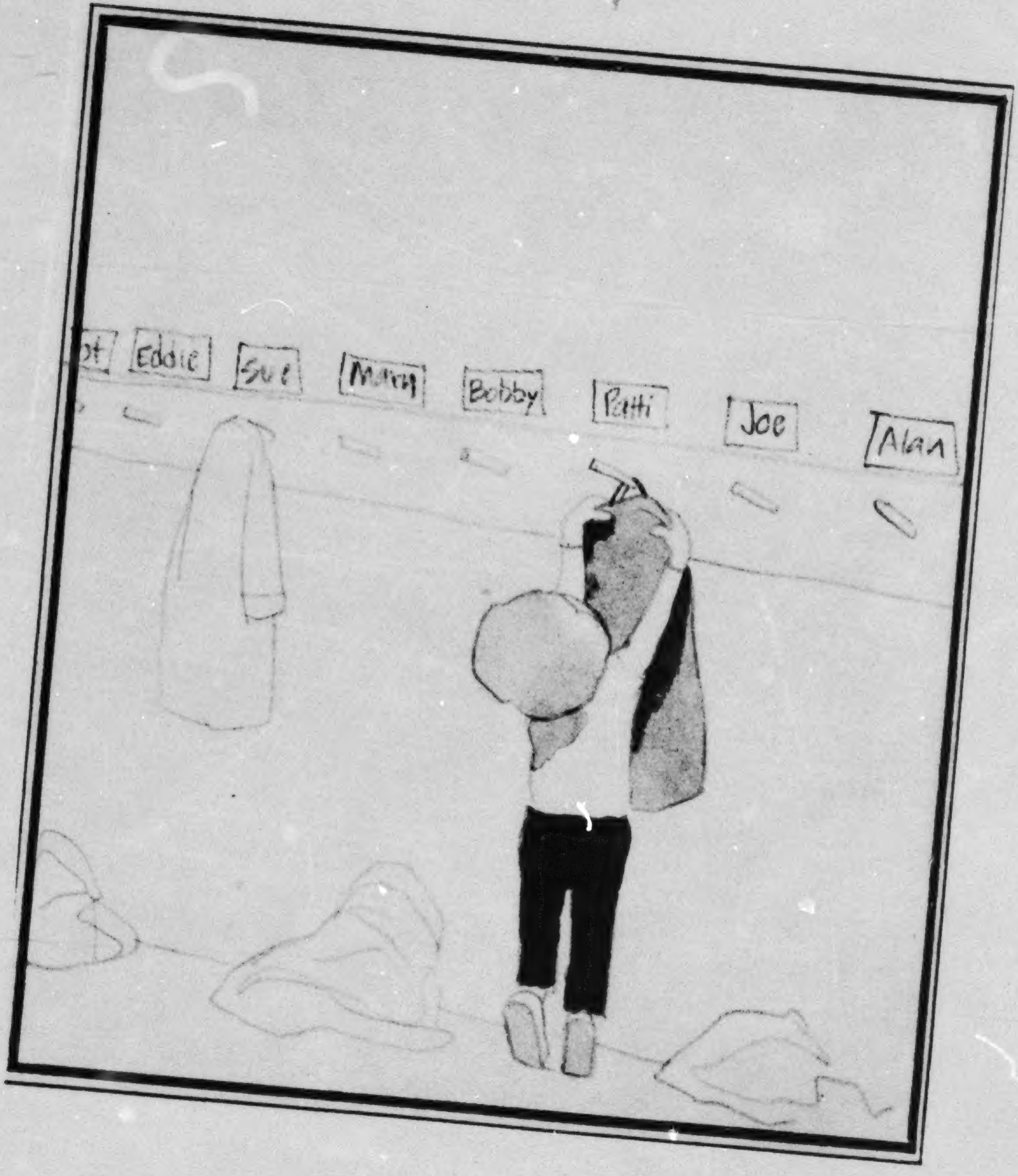
Be flexible! And if your arrangement doesn't suit you, be brave enough to try something else. Do it until you're satisfied.



Having the kids write an autobiography is a dandy way to start a new school year, and it works at every level. Start with name, age, birthday, place of birth, present home, and a few memories. Lots of kids can't remember their own birthdays, so give them the time to find out at home. Collect and keep the autobiographies until the end of the school year, at which time you can once more have something to hand back to the kids. They might even have some events to add from the school year just past.

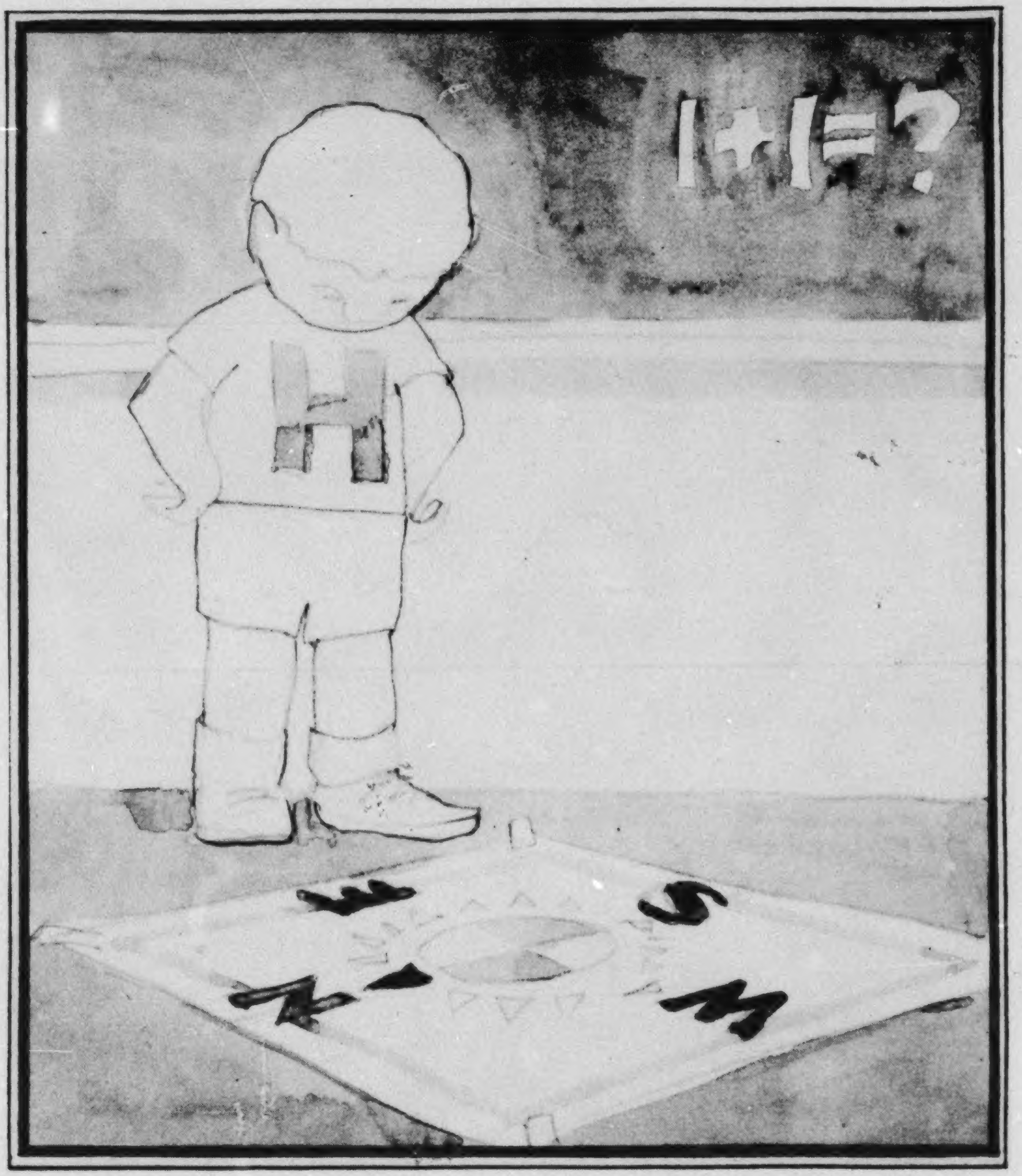

Where was I born?

Assign hooks to each child by putting a name tag above the hooks. Small kids have great difficulty hanging jackets on hooks unless there's a hanging tab at the neckline. Ask some older students (5th or 6th graders, perhaps) to sew in hanging loops for Kgn and 1st graders. If you can get hold of some light chain, make hanging loops out of chain. Just make sure it's sewn on securely.

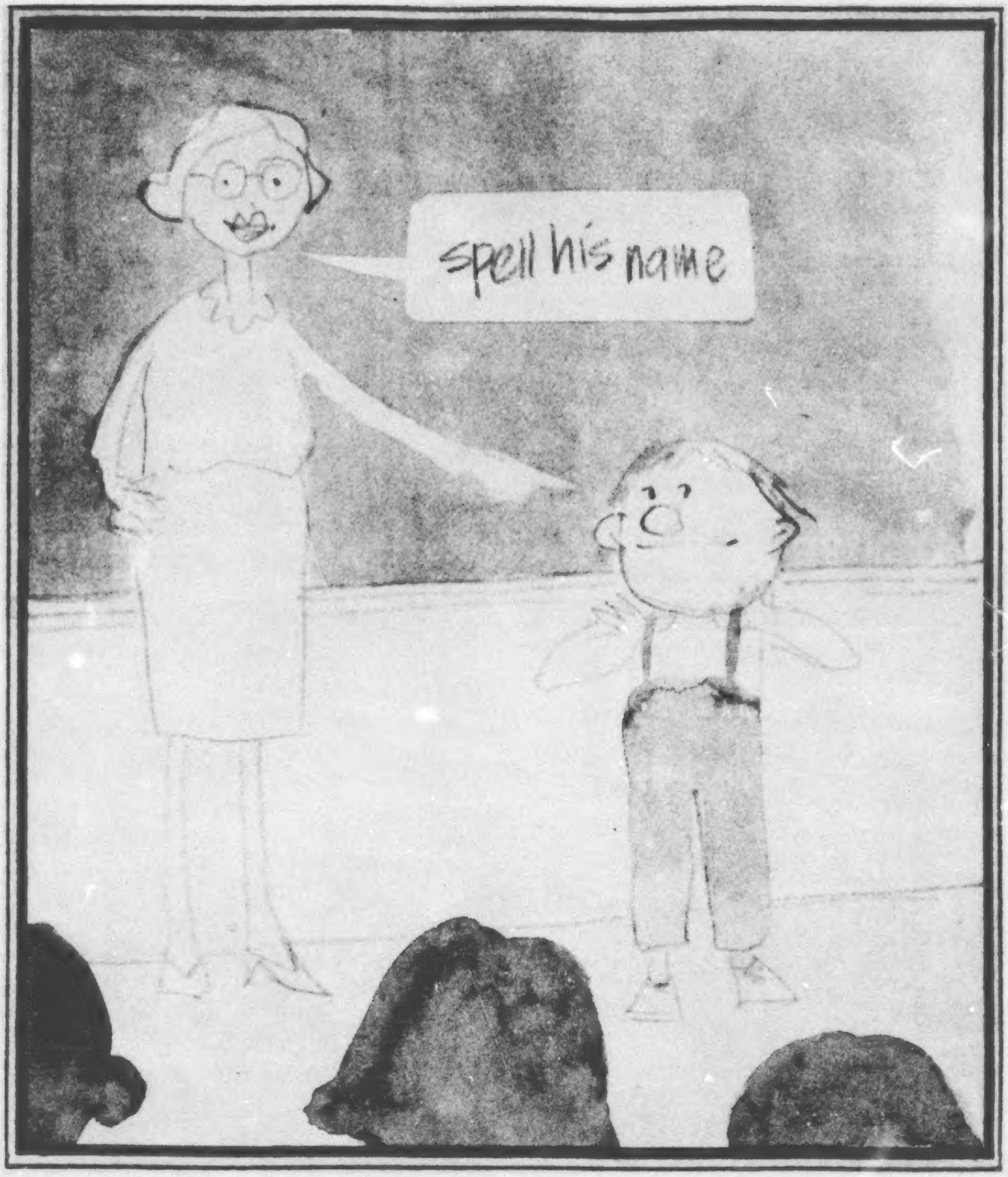

ot
Eddie
Sue
Marcy
Bobby
Patti
Joe
Alan

Label each wall in the classroom according to its compass direction. Make a large cardboard compass and tape it to the floor. Using a real compass, show each kid the direction to his home from school.

Paint a compass rose on the basement or garage floor, or use a cardboard one in the house.

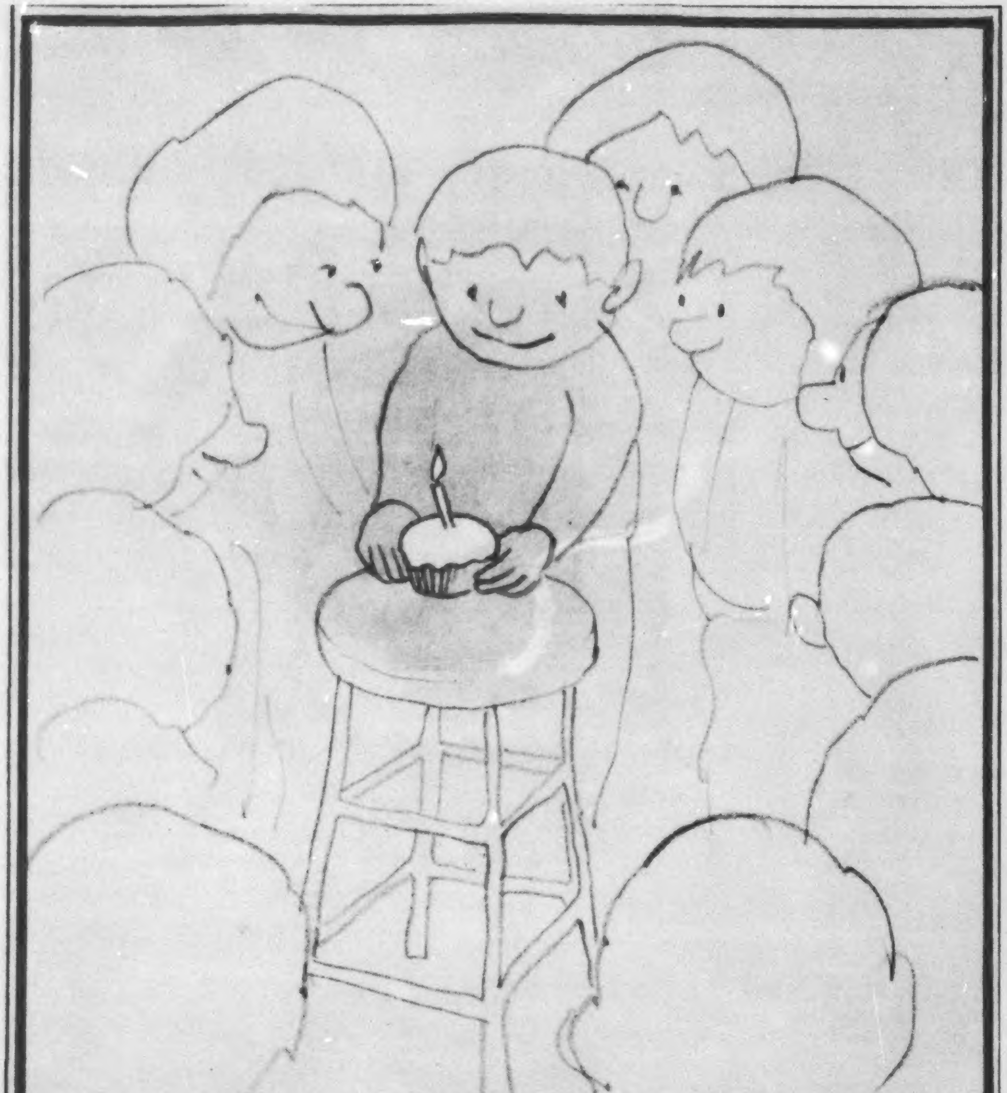

1+1=?
H
E
S
N
W

Spelling the names of classmates is easy if the names are written and posted on the job chart. Sneak an occasional name onto spelling lists during the first few months of school, and by December all names will be spelled correctly. Point out the kids who have the same first names spelled differently, i.e., Alan and Allen, Patty and Patti, Elisabeth and Elizabeth, etc.

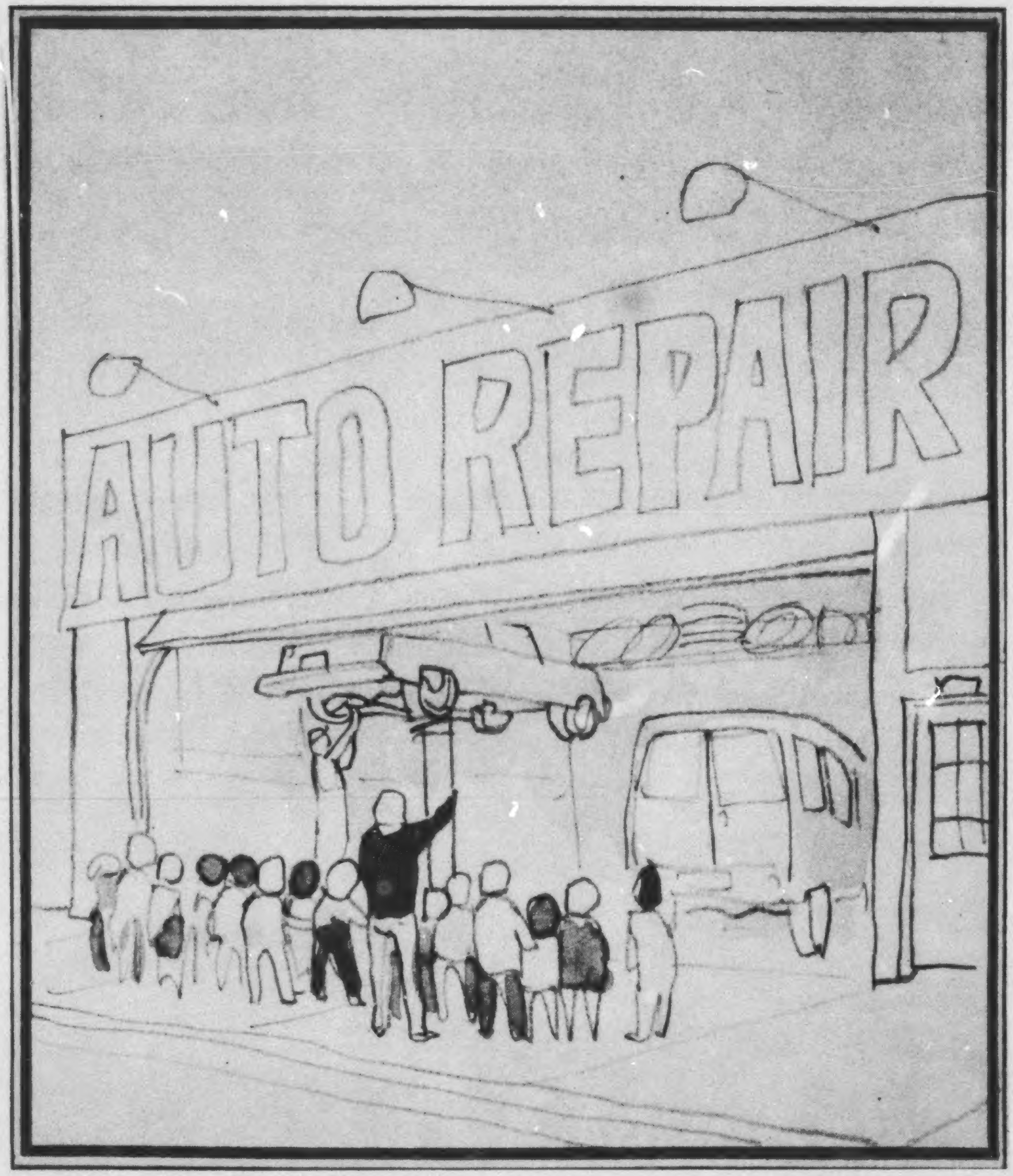

spell his name

Birthdays are truly special days, and there are many ways of recognizing them as something out-of-the ordinary for the celebrant. Many young children celebrate with home parties, and there are any number of types, from developing a theme to taking a roup of kids to a local ice-cream store for super special birthday sundaes.

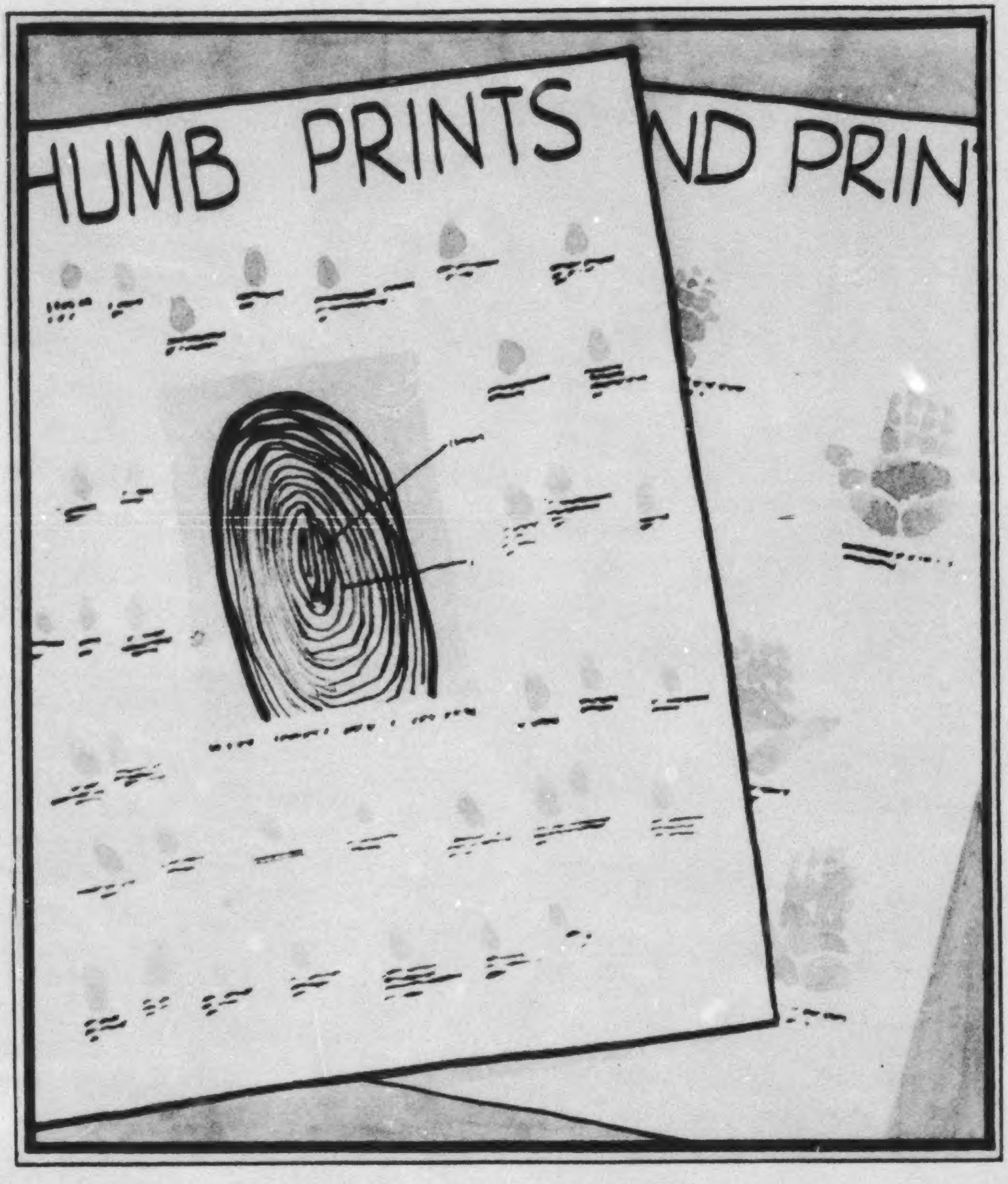
A school birthday party is delightful for the birthday child at the nursery and Kgn level, and often at the first and second grade level too. But beyond that, school birthdays are inconvenient. One nice way to acknowledge the birthday is to present the celebrant with a donut or a cupcake when the class is lined up for recess or lunch. Everyone sings the traditional song. Weekend birthday kids have their surprise either the Friday before or the Monday after.



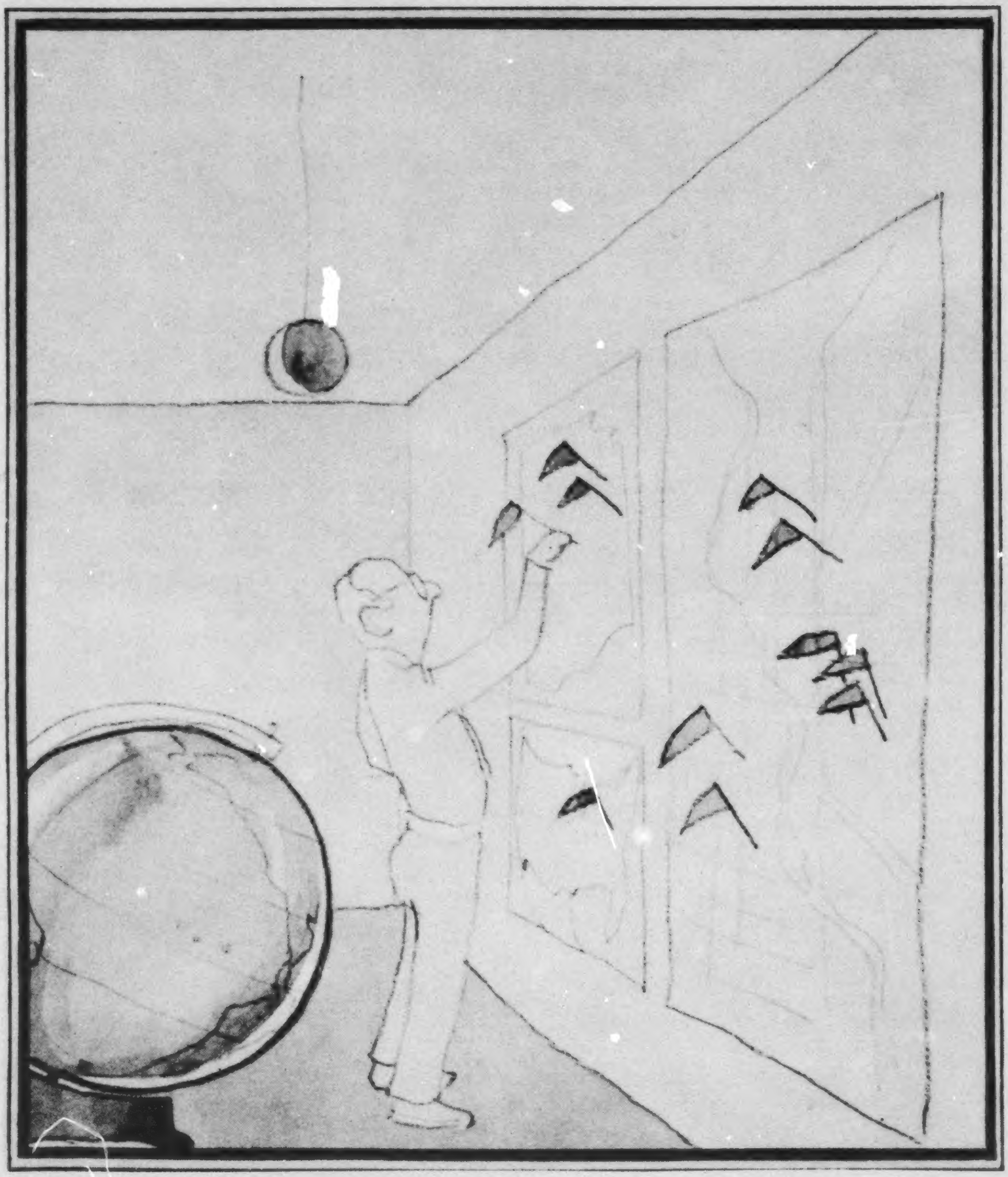
KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY sounds like a boring concept, but it can be very exciting. If you are a newcomer to the area, you can use the class as your beginning resource, and early in the school year ask one kid at a time just **WHAT** HE HAS DONE IN TOWN. Some kids know where every creek and puddle is, and some know only where the TV switch is in their own homes. It might be fun to talk to a few parents (outside of school) to find out locations of things in the town, and take a few walking field trips, if you're close enough, to see things. Once a school I was in had a mushroom ranch nearby, and every few months I'd take the class to see changes in the ranch. One father had a garage near school, and the class visited there twice during the year. These were short walking trips, about half an hour and half a mile, and with budgets being what they are now, field trips by bus might be out in your school. So do look close to your school and investigate what's nearby.


AUTO REPAIR

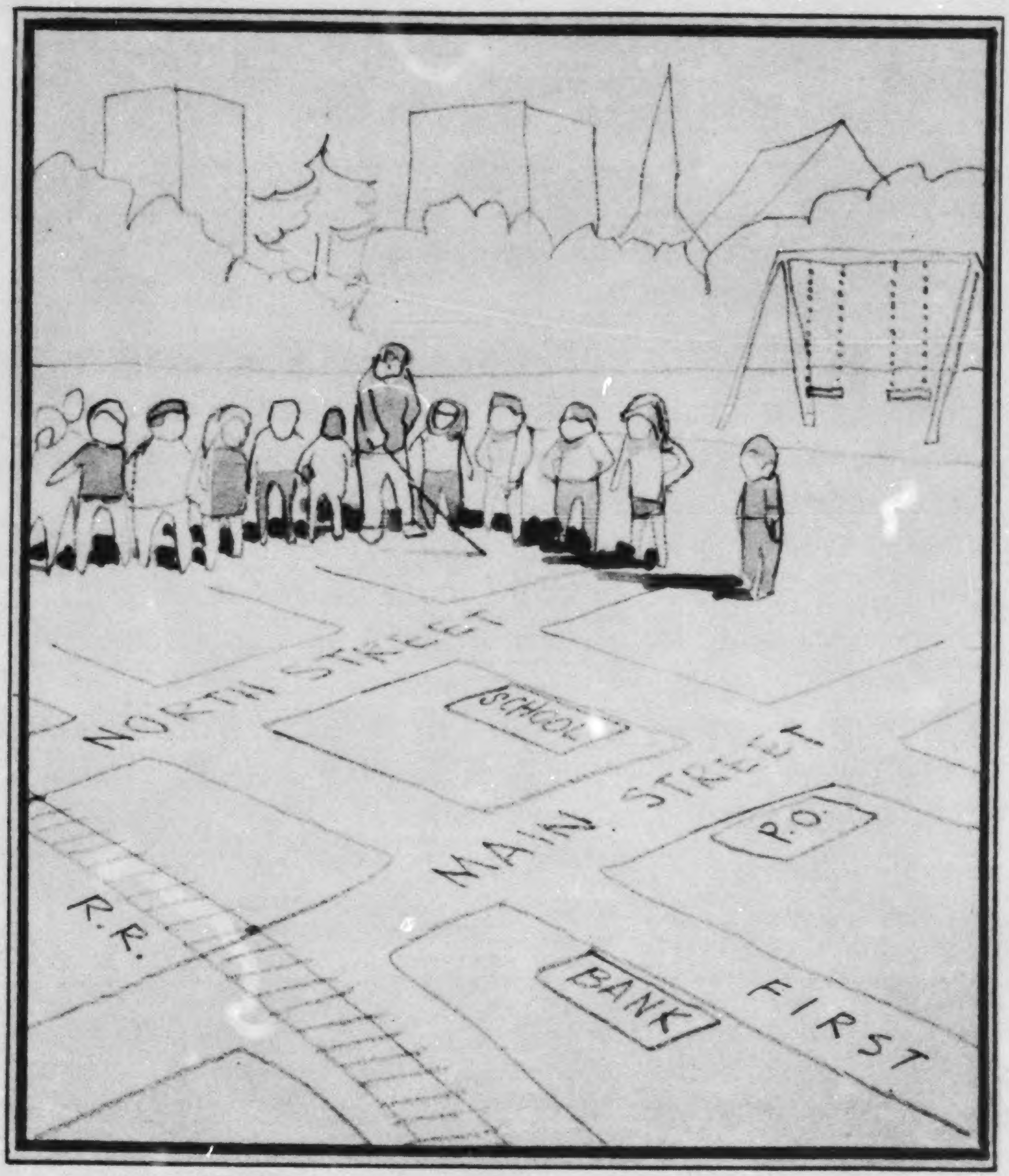
A large white paper, a stamp pad, a thumb print from each kid in class, and there it is... a very unique poster. It shows how individualistic each thumb print is. Take a moment to discuss the dissimilarities as well as similarities of thumb prints, and of people, and anything you can think of.


HUMB PRINTS
ND PRIN

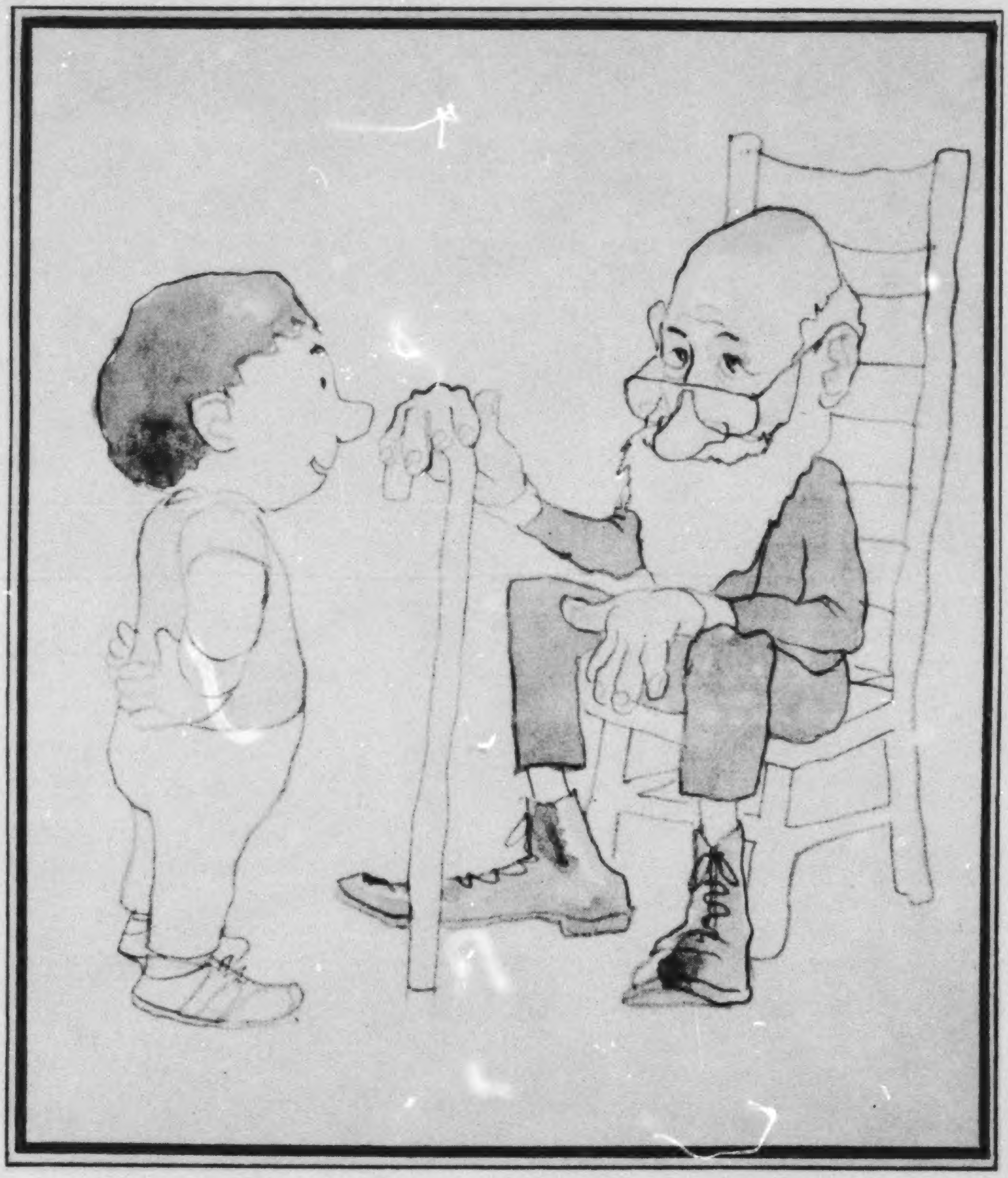
Do you have a map of your town on the wall somewhere? You should, and mark the location of each kid's home. Put up a map of the state too, so that relationships between places can be noted frequently. Then, make sure there's a map of the country. And a globe is a must! Use all of them as often as you can, even with Kgn kids. Then, any time that a place is mentioned, find it on the map and mark it with a flag or pushpin, labeling it. You can say, "John's Grandma lives in Provincetown, and here it is on the map". Then, mark it with a flag labeled, "John's Grandma".



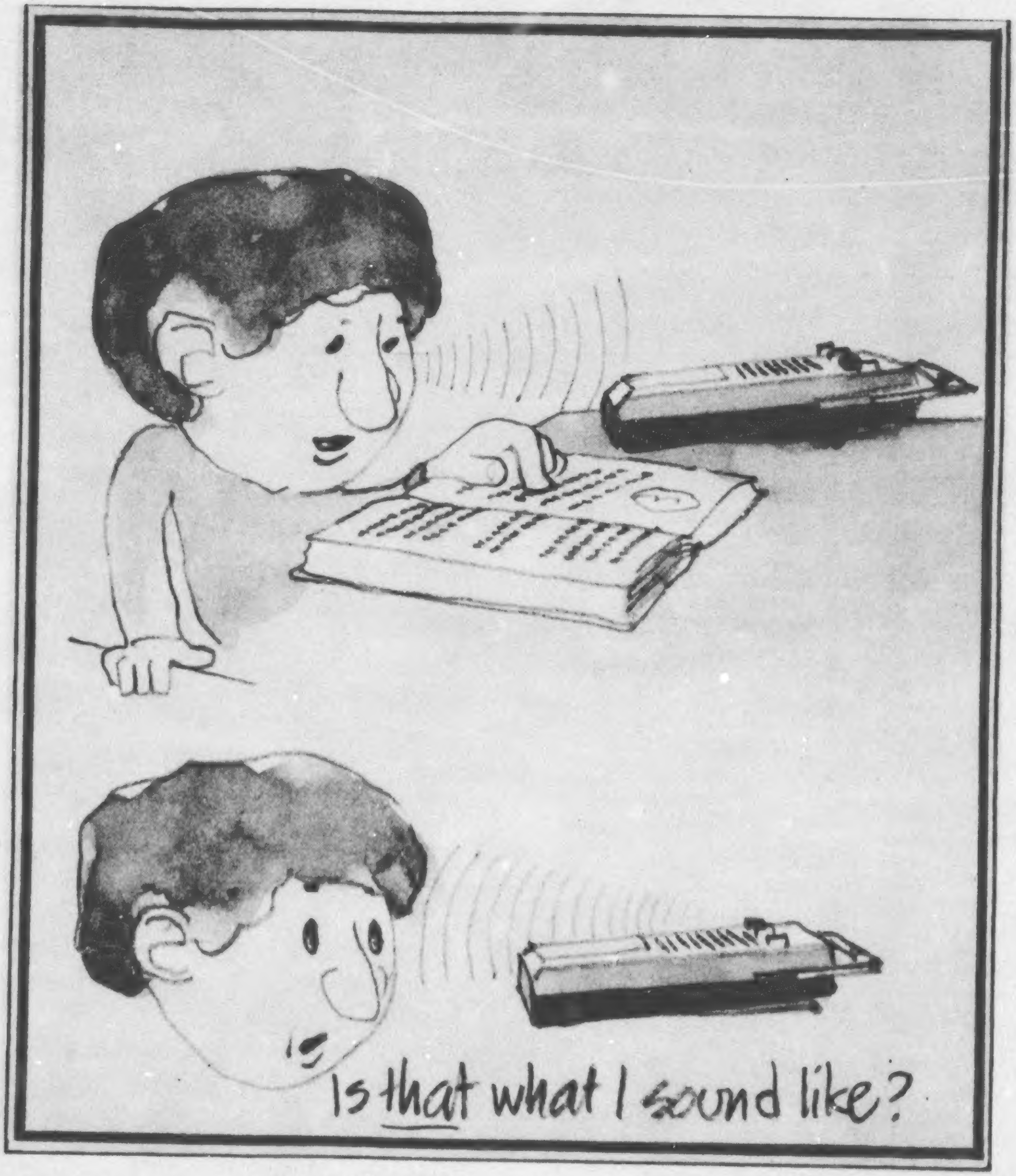
The school parking lot is a wonderful surface for drawing a map of your town or area. It's also a wonderful place to draw a full-scale floor plan of your classroom. You might also want to draw life-sized profiles or silhouettes of elephants and dinosaurs and whales.


NORTH STREET
SCHOOL
MAIN STREET
P.O.
R.R.
BANK
FIRST

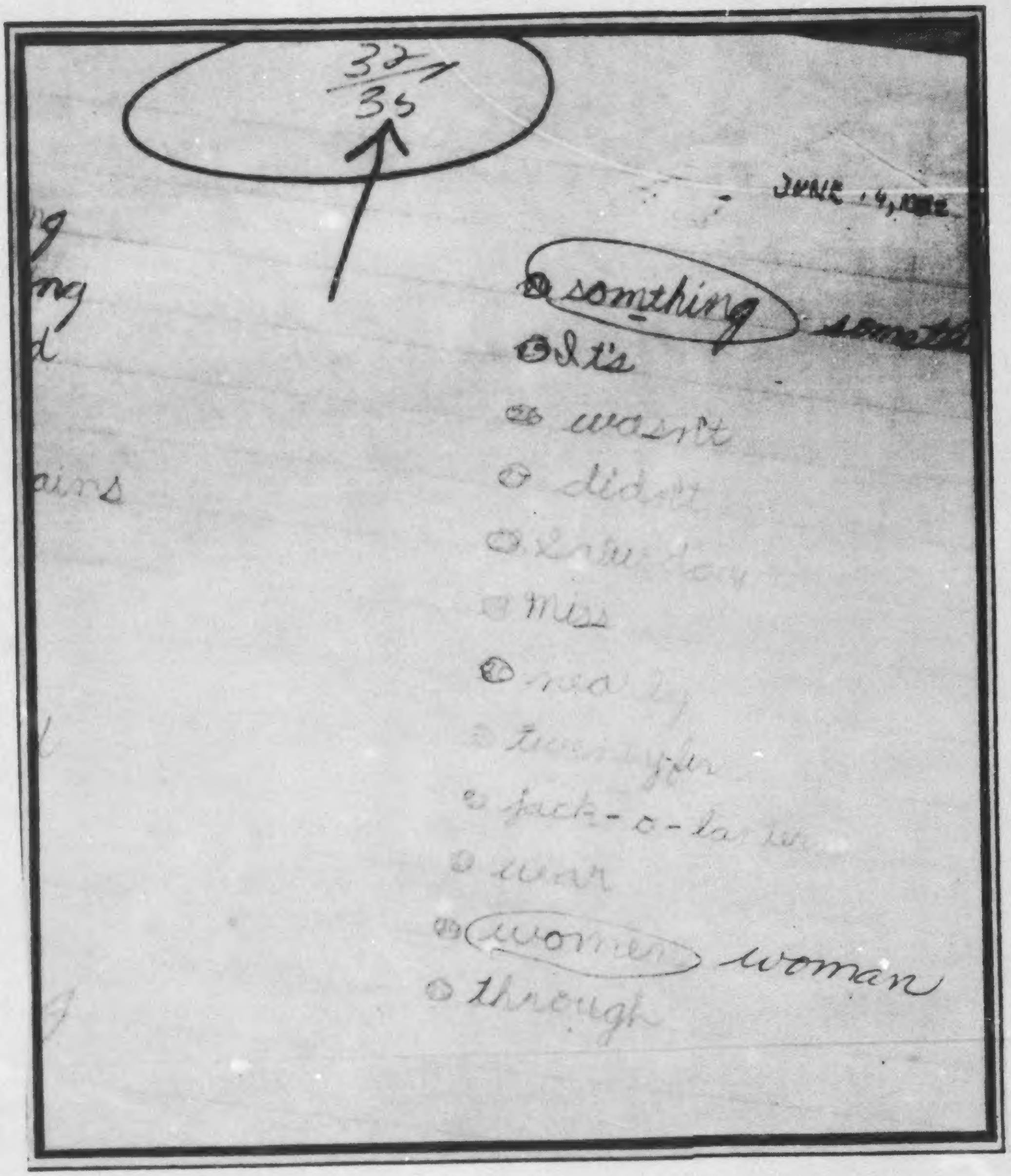
One 4th grade visits a nearby nursing home every 2 weeks. Each student has a special resident to talk with, and the initial visit is one of great importance, for the meeting of old and young can bring great excitement to both parties. After 2 visits, the kids bring a picture book along to read to the residents, and it certainly does improve oral reading. The students walk to the nursing home, and some of the students have done some visiting outside of school with their new friends. Some very special friendships have developed, and both parties look forward to their shared time.



Letting a child tape record himself reading aloud is fun, especially when it's played back. Few kids can recognize their own voices.


Is that what I sound like?

Circling a mistake is kinder than scrawling a large X, and the entire mistake can be enclosed with a gentle circle.



32
35

JUNE 14, 19[illegible]

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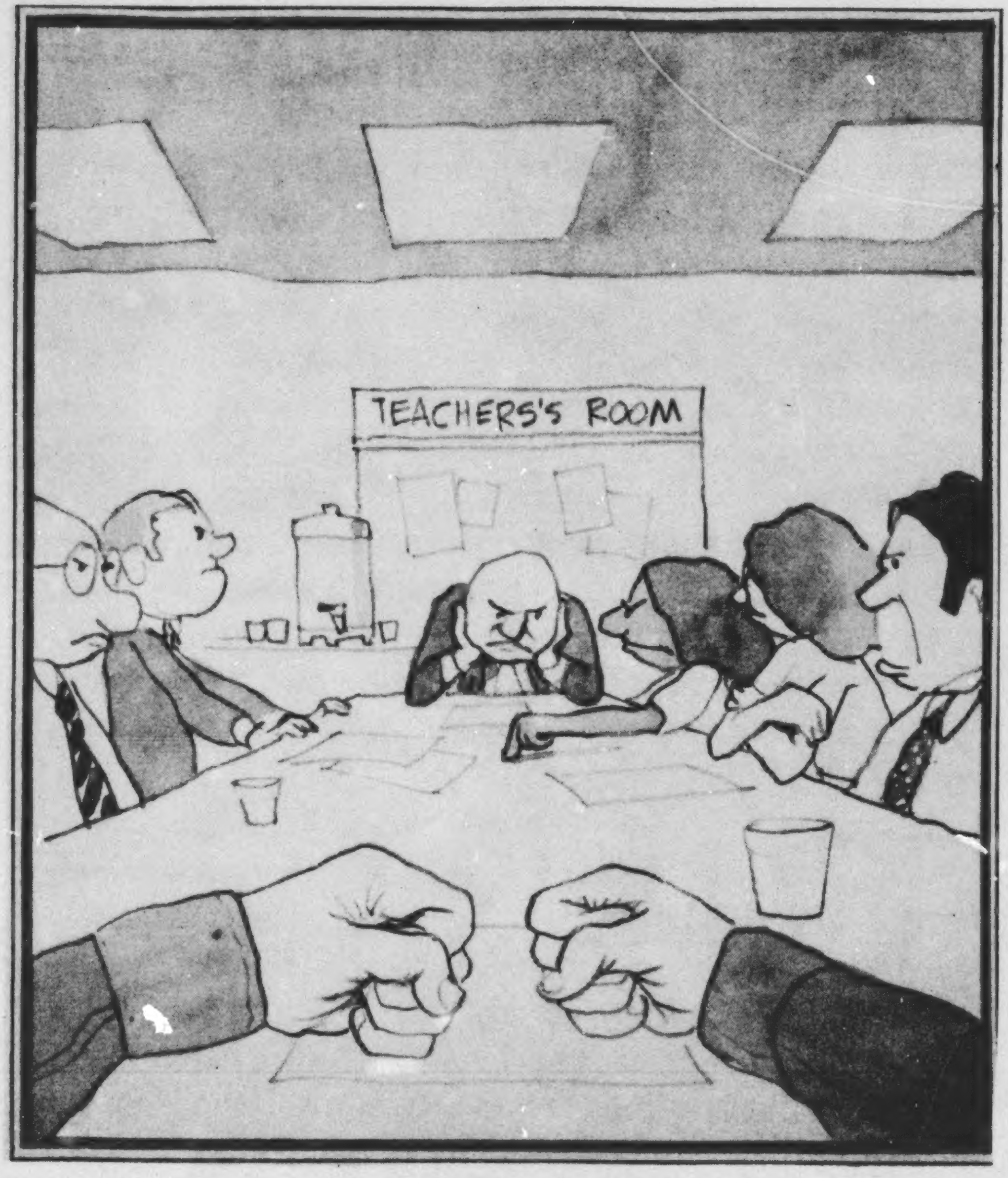
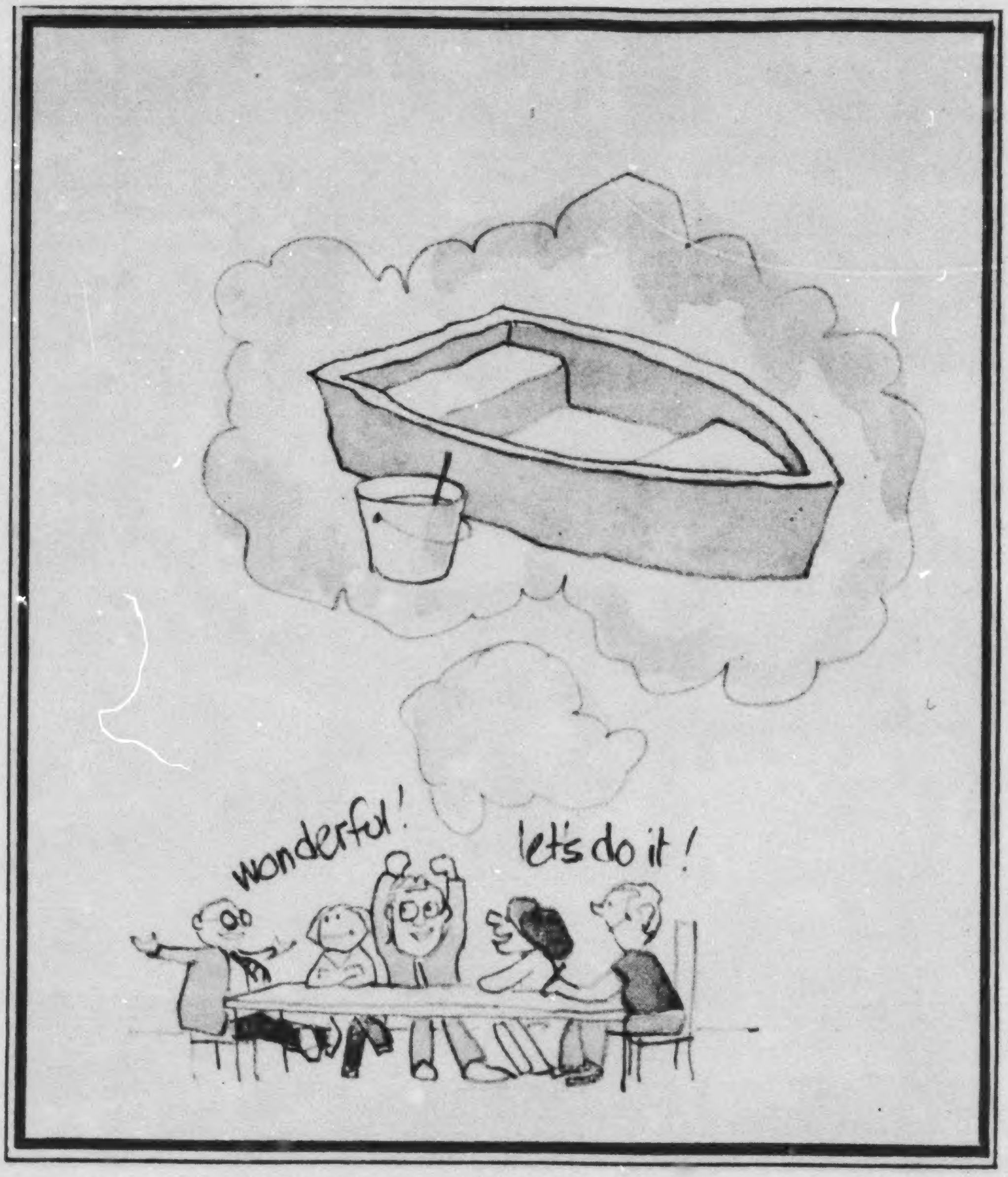
ng
d
airs
d
J

- somthing someth
- It's
- wasn't
- didn't
- Saturday
- miss
- really
- [illegible]
- jack-o-lantern
- war
- women woman
- through

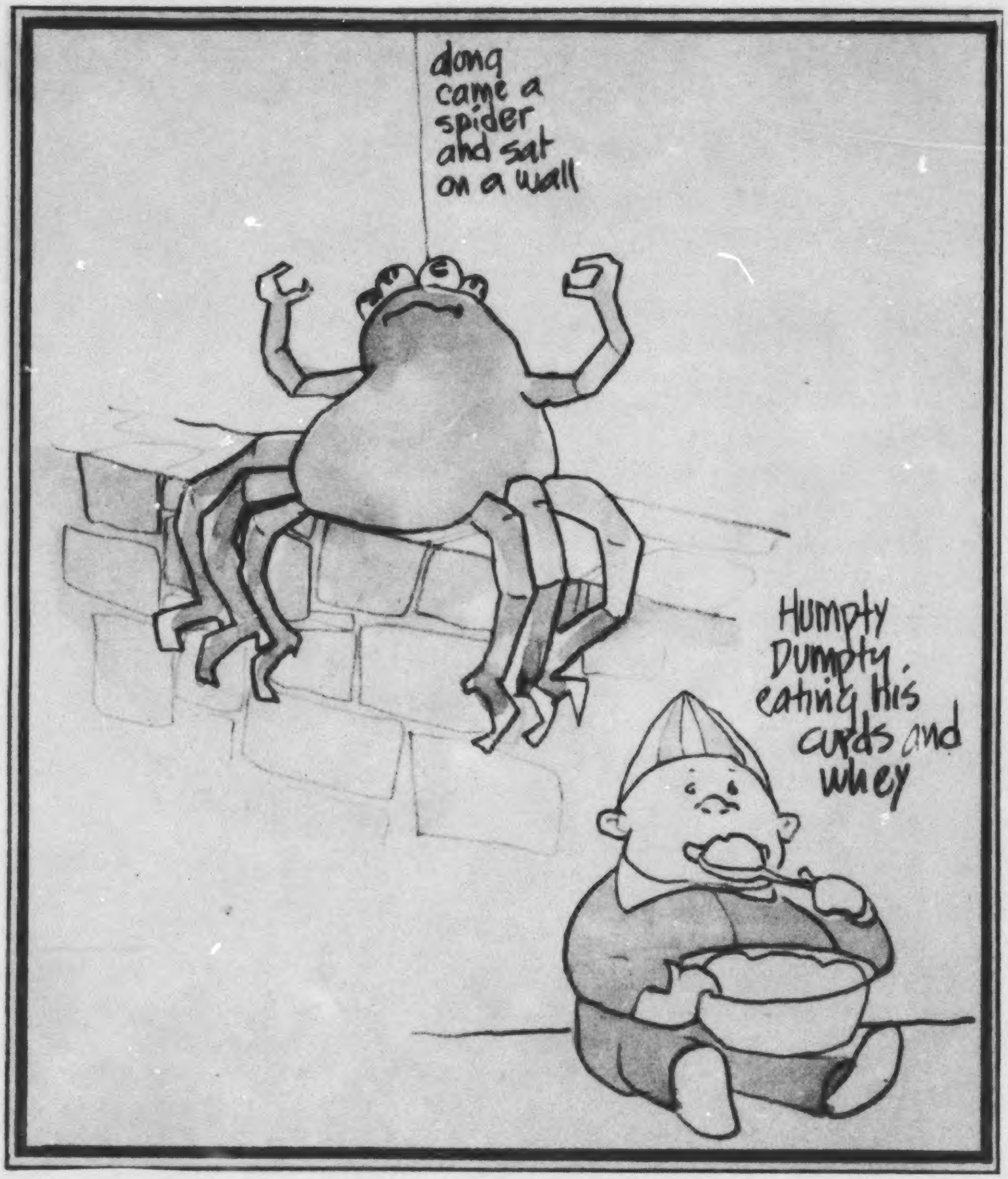
The **TEACHERS ROOM** IS EITHER A REFUGE OR A NIGHTMARE! Some teachers' rooms are quite destructive because the teachers sit around having bitch sessions day after day. Some are friendly places, where newcomers and substitutes are warmly welcomed, and valid educational ideas are exchanged. If your teachers' room seems unfriendly, it well may be that there are feuds and factions that you know nothing about. Neutrality is the best idea, but might be hard to accomplish. However, by meeting outside of school one day a week with various teachers, you might get to know and like them as people as well as colleagues. But try not getting involved in the personal struggles that often go on for years.


TEACHERS'S ROOM

Using your fellow teachers as sounding boards for ideas you have can be a wonderful way of learning things. But rather than suggesting something to the entire group at once and being shot down by stony silence or great dissension, you might do well to present your ideas to one teacher at a time, asking for suggestions, evaluating all the input you get, and then following up by telling the teacher or teachers with whom you've talked how it went, what was good about it, what was bad. For example, one teacher wanted to make a large paper mache boat in the classroom. She spoke to 9 teachers in her school, one at a time, and found 4 that flat-out thought it was a stupid idea, very messy, a time waster. The other 5, however, offered ideas such as, be sure to work on top of oilcloth or plastic drop cloth, use colored newsprint (comics) for one layer, then cover every bit with regular black and white, then another layer of comics, then black and white, and if each layer is completely covered you'll have it thick enough to be sturdy, paint it on Friday and let it dry all weekend, etc. The project was successful, the paper mache boat was sturdy enough to hold 4 kids at a time, and the boat has been used in parades for several years in that town.


wonderful!
let's do it!

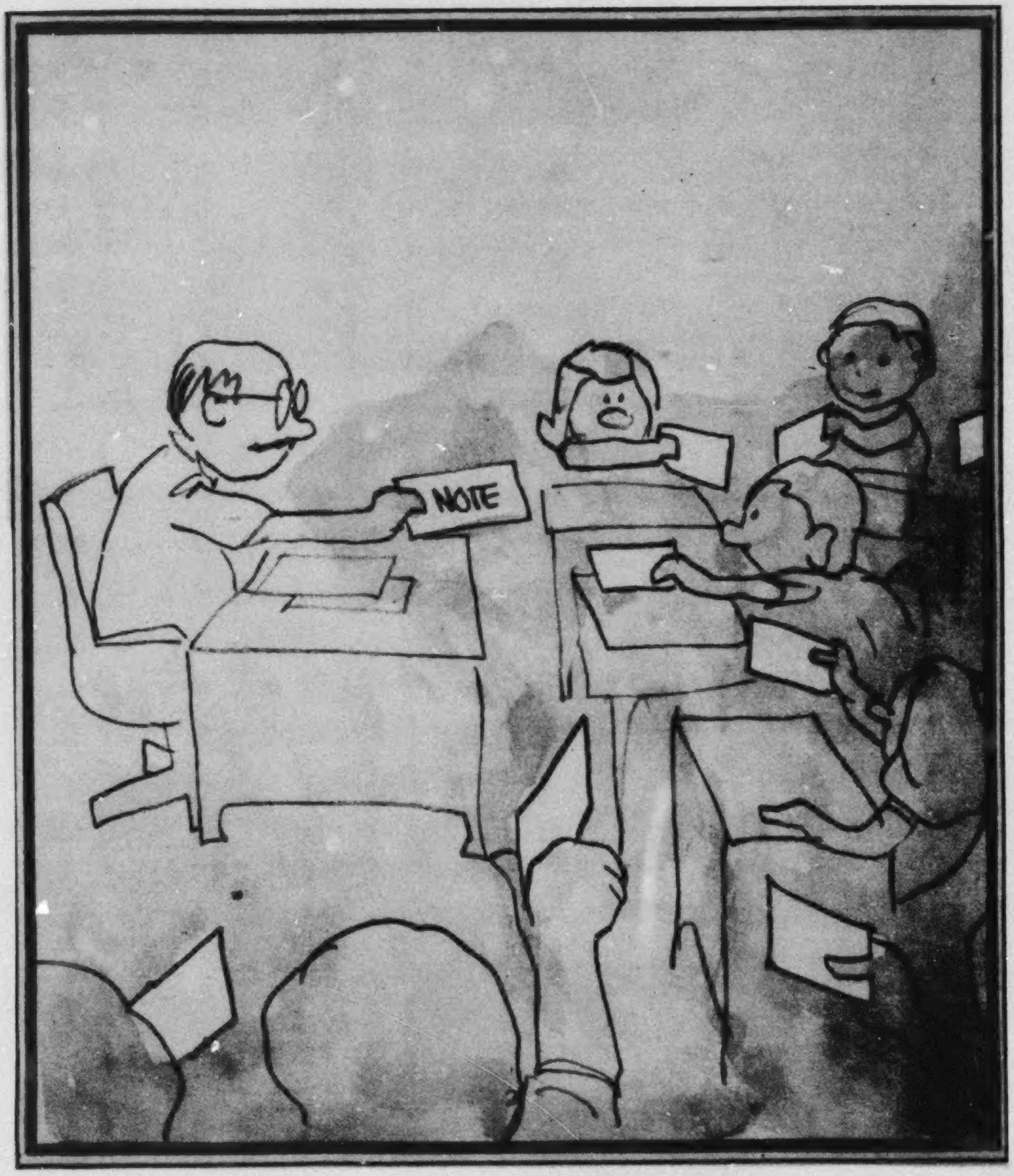
Most Kgn kids know most nursery rhymes. One delightful project for 5th graders and Kgners is to make up a stack of 3 X 5 cards asking questions like: Who sat on a wall? Who ate curds and whey? Who lost their mittens?


along
came a
spider
and sat
on a wall
Humpty
Dumpty
eating his
curds and
whey

How many kids can stand on an inner tube at one time? It takes skill, balance, and **GREAT** cooperation.

7

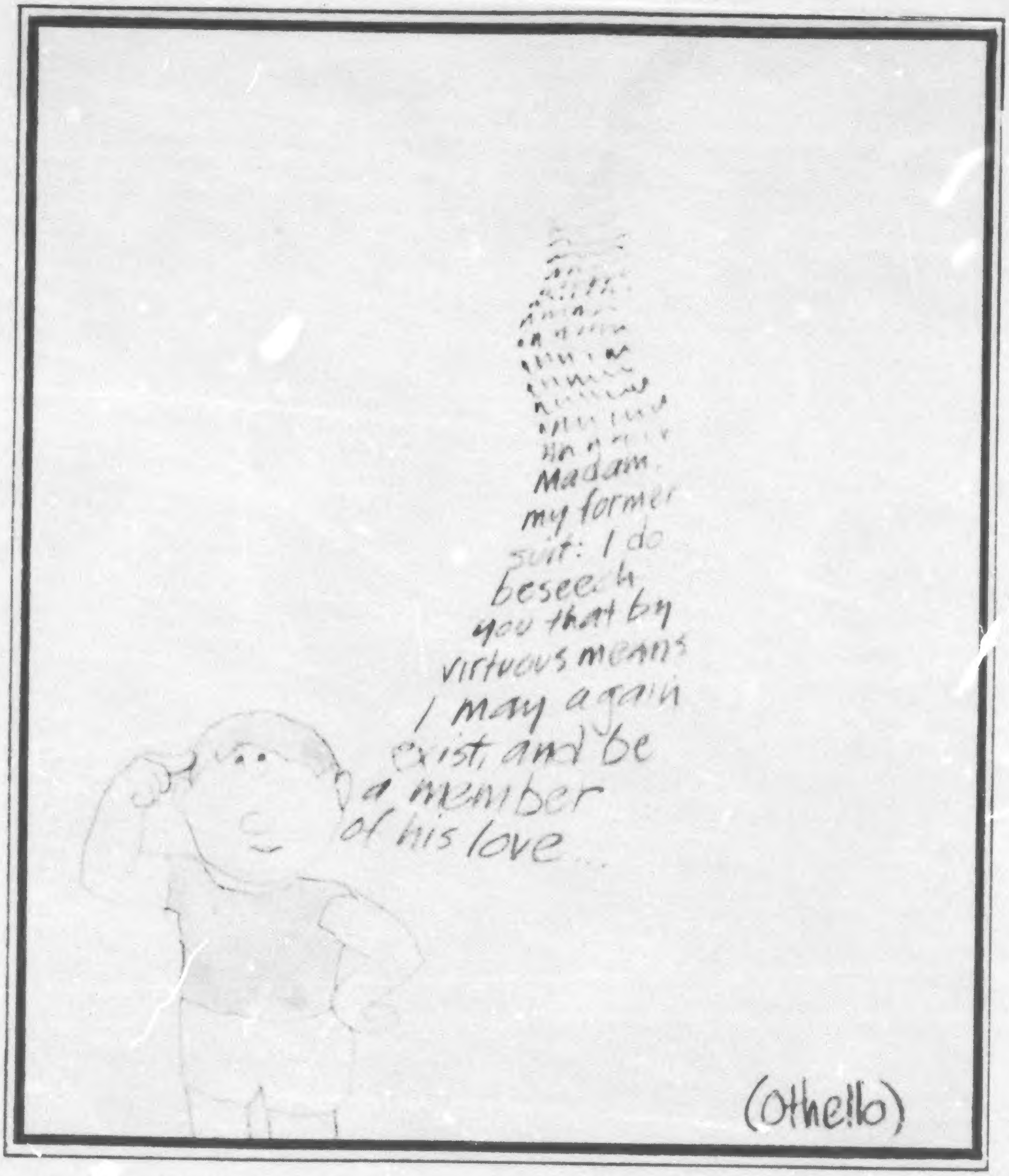
If you've ever had laryngitis, you know that everyone who comes in contact with you whispers. There's nothing like a day of silence in school. No one talks in the classroom. All communication is by note. If something important must be talked about, the teacher calls, "Time out!" and everyone can talk. When the teacher calls, "Time in", no one may talk. Outside of the actual class participating in Silent Day, if special teachers come to the room, Time Out is in order. And if messengers come to the room, they, of course, may speak to the teacher while the class says nothing. Make up your own rules, and try it! Once every month or 2 is enough, however.


NOTE

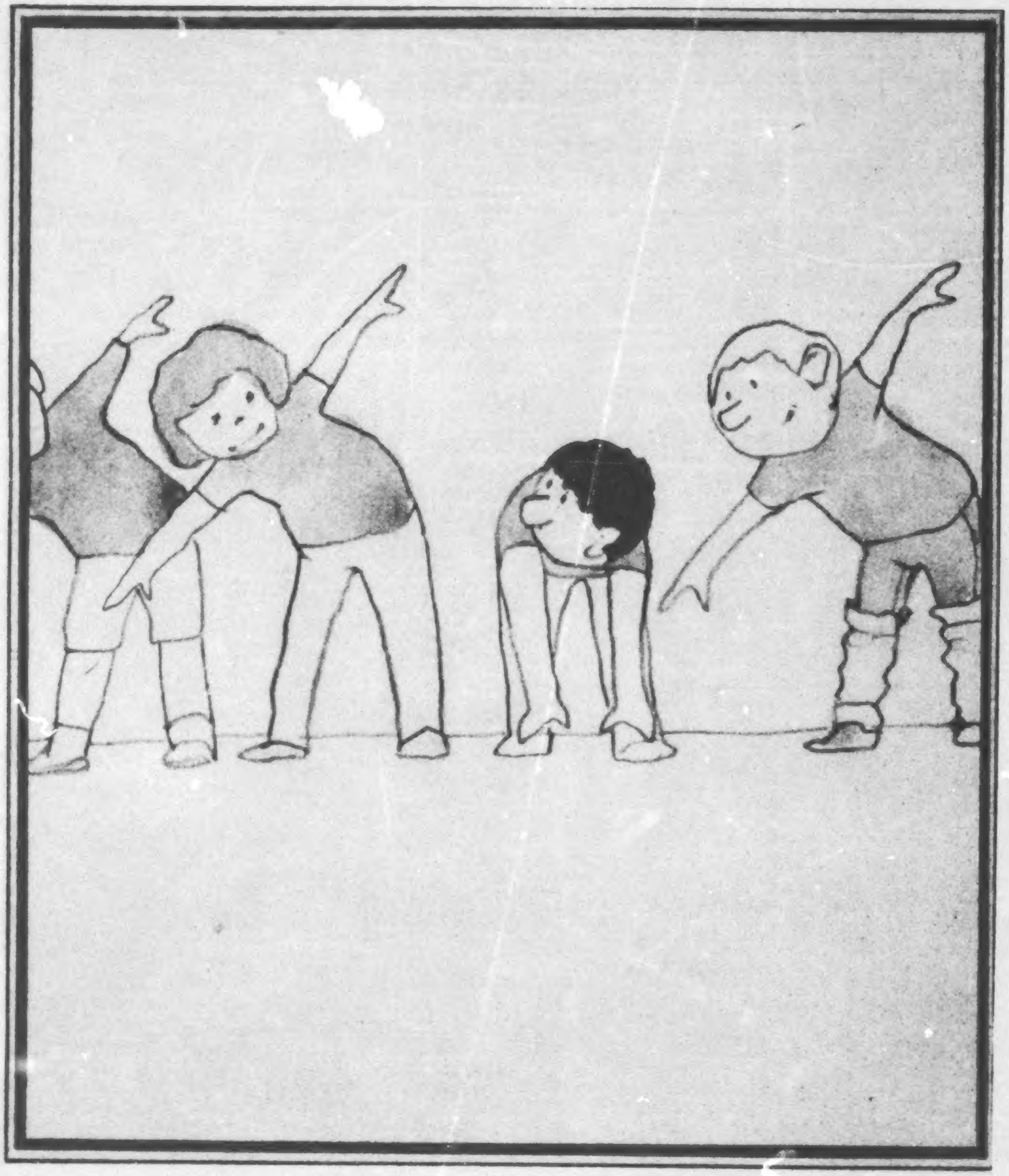
Memorizing poetry seems to be a lost art, but I'll bet many of you who had to memorize poems in school can recite many of them still!

Kids really LOVE to memorize poetry. Pick up a good anthology of poems and start with short poems which the kids copy from the chalkboard. Have a contest for memorizing, and by the next day everyone will know the poem. Gradually have longer poems copied, then some super long ones. Each class has at least one excellent memorizer, and he's not necessarily the smartest one in the class. One teacher has a poetry collection that the class members have copied all year. At the end of the year, the class is handed all the poems they've written and memorized and they enjoy spouting those they know. Often they re-memorize poems the last day of school.

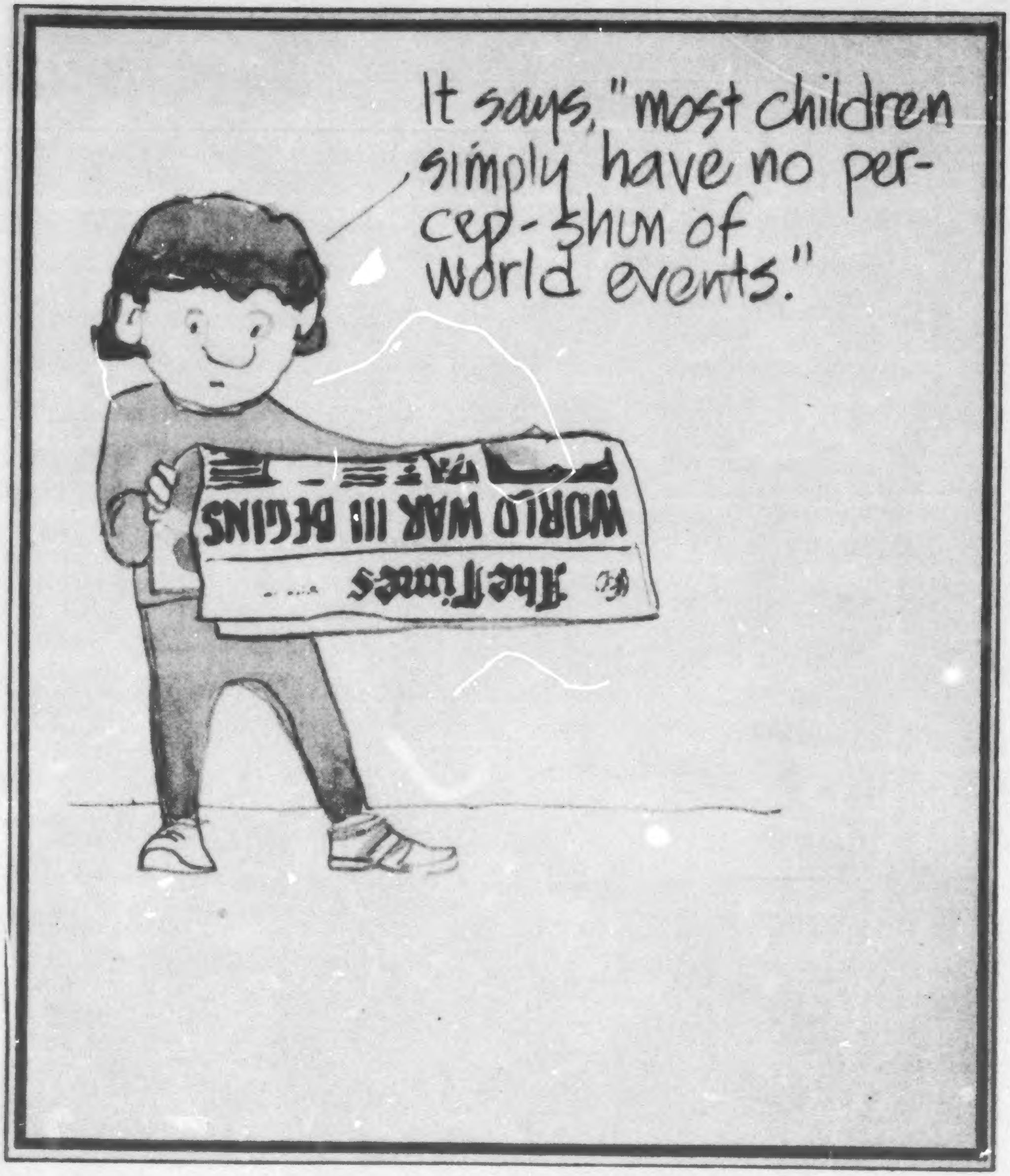
Don't forget to include the author's name!


Madam, my former suit: I do beseech you that by virtuous means I may again exist, and be a member of his love...
(Othello)

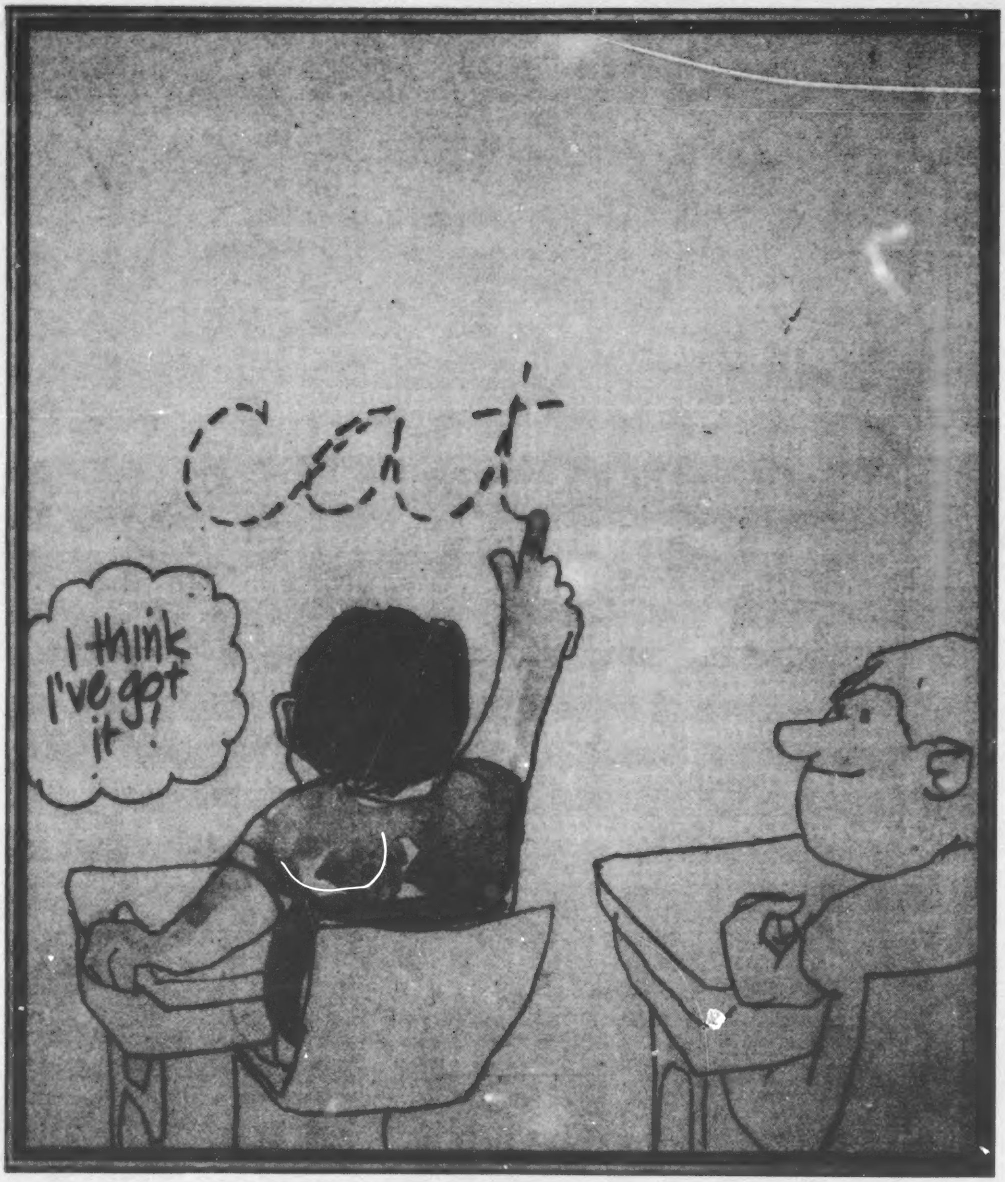
When the energy level is down, usually after about an hour and a half of school work, have everyone stand up and do some calisthenics. Each movement should be repeated at least 20 times, and encourage oral counting. Work for large muscle movement, and be sure to work both upper and lower muscle groups. It re-charges everyone, especially the teacher!



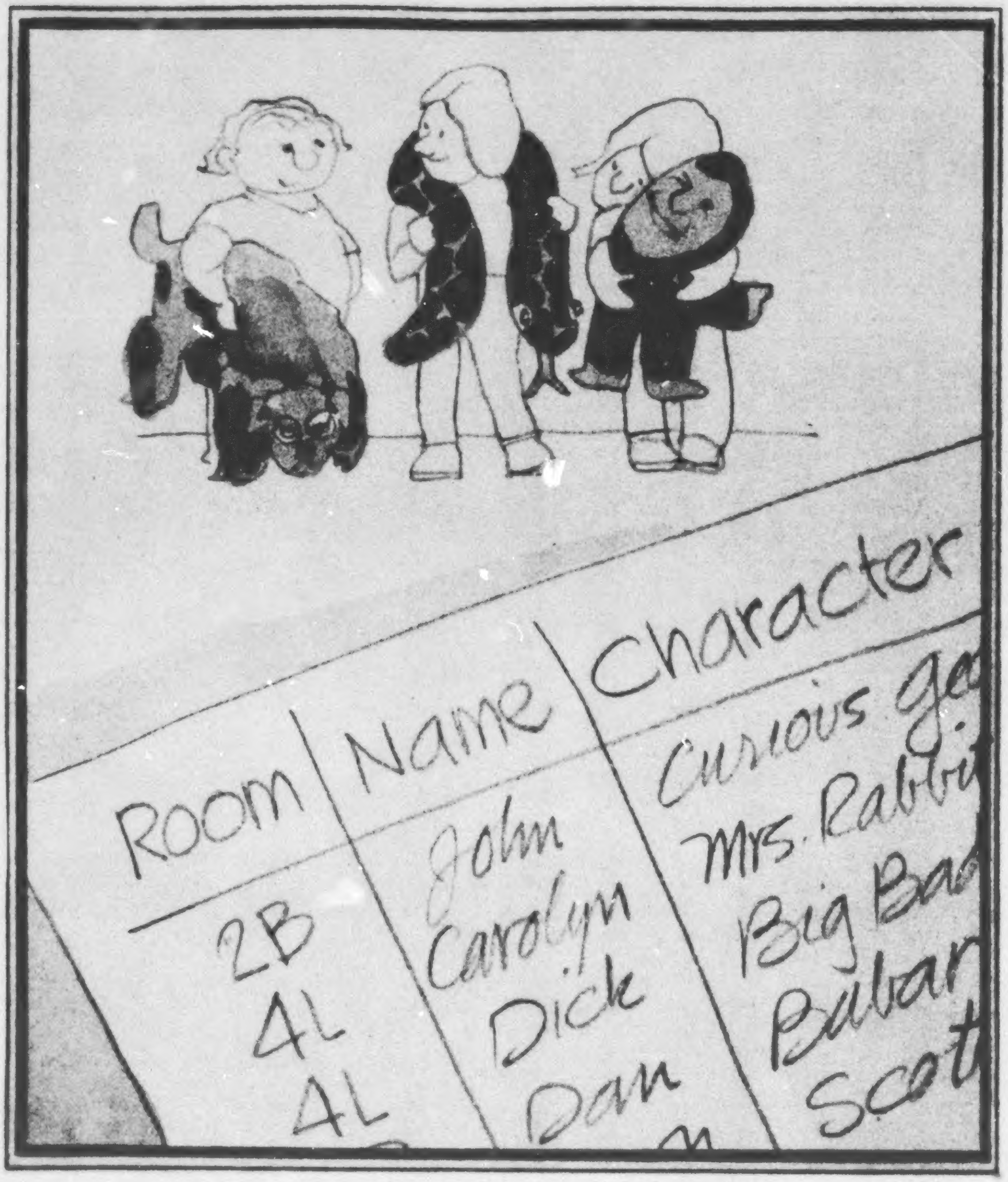
Not many children have much awareness of the world around them. Once a week, have five students tell some newsworthy things they know about. If possible (and remember that many families don't get a daily or even weekly newspaper), have them bring in articles from the newspaper, and "News Time" becomes "Show and Tell" on an advanced level.


It says, "most children simply have no per-cep-shun of world events."
WORLD WAR III BEGINS
The Times

Some schools have spelling books, some just have lists, some have neither, but eventually you'll have to give spelling tests. Poor spellers very often need more than looking at a list and trying to remember the spelling of words. Sometimes having everyone write the word (correctly spelled) in the air while everyone spells it out loud is an effective kinetic approach for poor visual memorizers. But don't stop at one repetition; do it at least 5 times...five seems to be the magic memory number for children. It's the oral spelling while air-writing a word that brings something together for the poor kids who are rotten spellers.

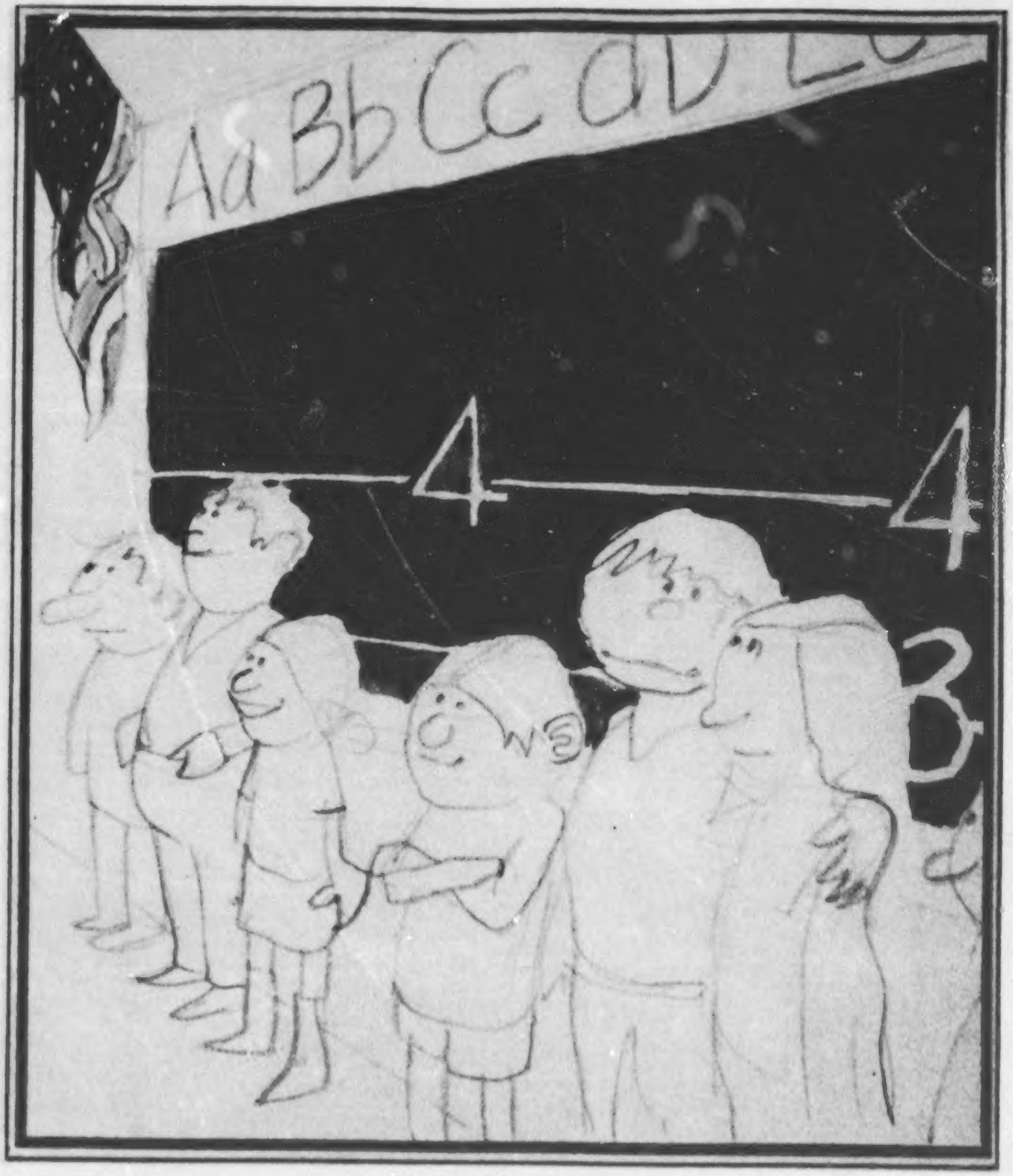

cat
I think I've got it!

One school library has a vast collection of stuffed critters. Some are store-bought, some home-made. From the amount of wear on each one, all seem well-loved. They all have names. Most of 'em match up with characters from books. Some of them are: a large collection of Beatrix Potter characters; an entire Duckling Family. (from **MAKE WAY FOR DUCKLINGS**), from Mr. and Mrs. down to each duckling; Curious George in 3 sizes; many bears, large and small; some tiny chicks; a large otter; Raggedy Ann and Raggedy Andy; all the Poo characters, with a tiny Roo in Kanga's pouch. Every day 3 children from each classroom are allowed to choose a character that they may keep with them all day. The characters are signed out of the library each morning on a long list, and returned at the close of school that same day. Besides having a nice stuffed toy for the day, each kid knows what book the character is from, for the librarian has a tag pinned to each animal with its name and that of the author or book from which it comes. After a few years in this school library, you can bet that most of the kids know most of the characters by name **AND** have read the books too.

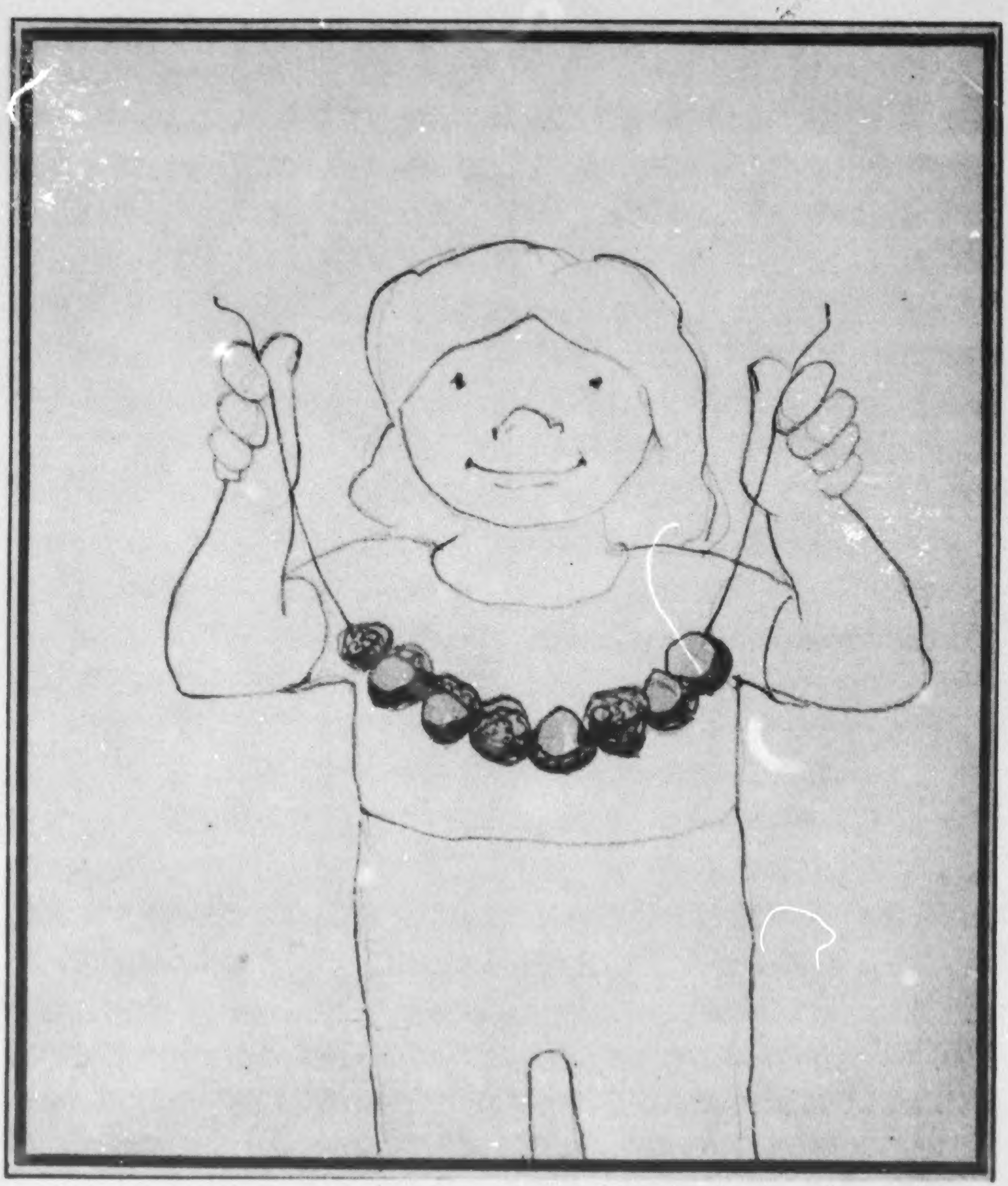

Room
Name
Character
2B
4L
4L
John
Carolyn
Dick
Dan
Curious ge
Mrs. Rabbi
Big Ba
Babar
Scot

One teacher I know always lines up his class in front of the chalkboard after he's drawn lines at 3 foot and 4 foot levels. He then takes a photo of the class on the first day of school. He repeats the photo...same pose...the last week of school, and lets the kids actually **SEE** their growth during that school year.

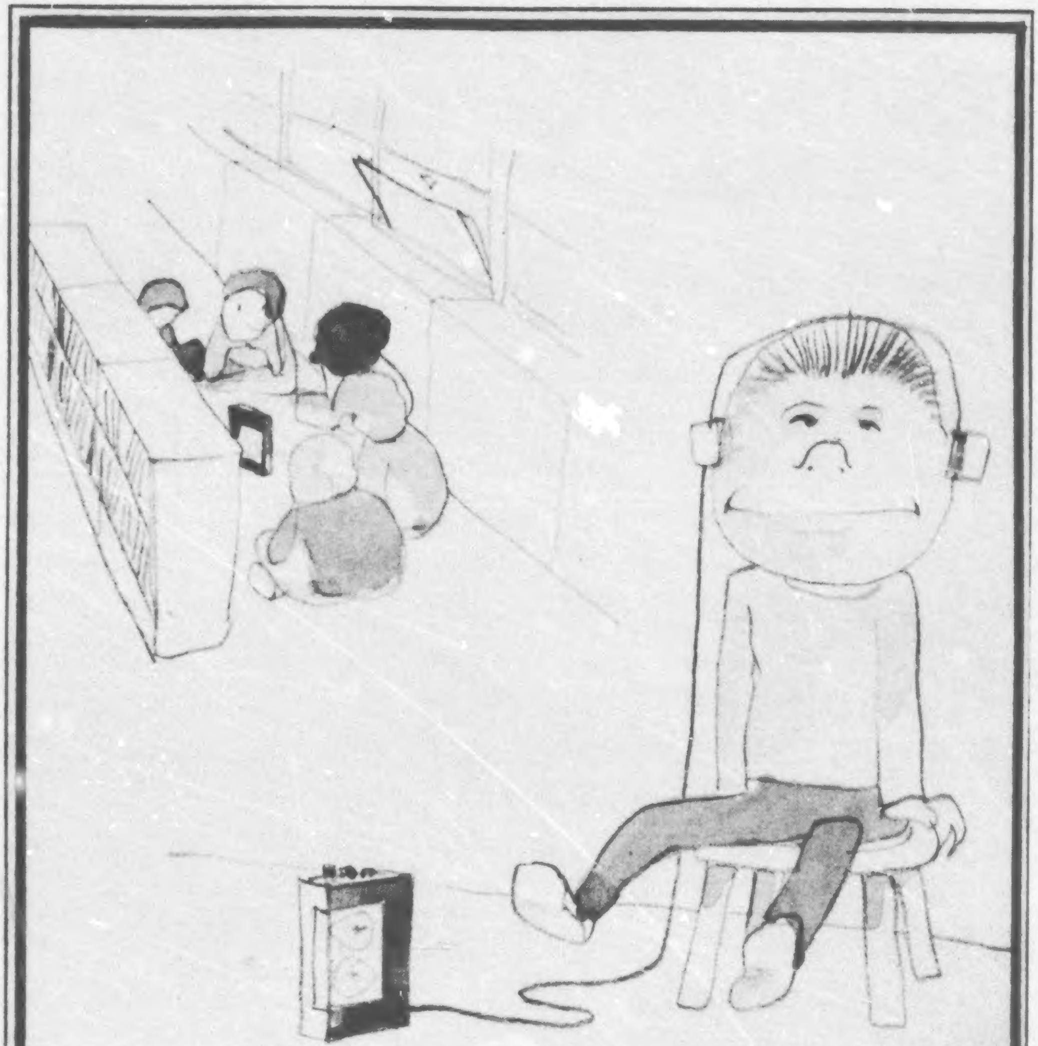
We always took a holiday photo of parents and kids to show our friends, as well as our kids, how much they'd grown in a year. Some years we could notice great growth, but many years looked much like the previous year because there'd been so little change.


Aa Bb Cc dD
4
4
3

Autumn brings acorns and chestnuts and other nuts. If you live in an area where any of these grow, be sure to make a necklace of one or all. Simply string some acorns (with caps) on a piece of fishing line...just enough to hang in the front. They're very uncomfortable on the back of the neck! If you can find a goodly supply, bring in enough for the class, and have each kid make her own necklace. Often you must punch a hole with an ice pick or nut pick, but do this yourself first, and don't let the kids try it...the nuts slip, and a puncture is mighty painful. Use a very large needle and double fishing line, and tie the knot at the end about half-a-dozen times so it stays tied.



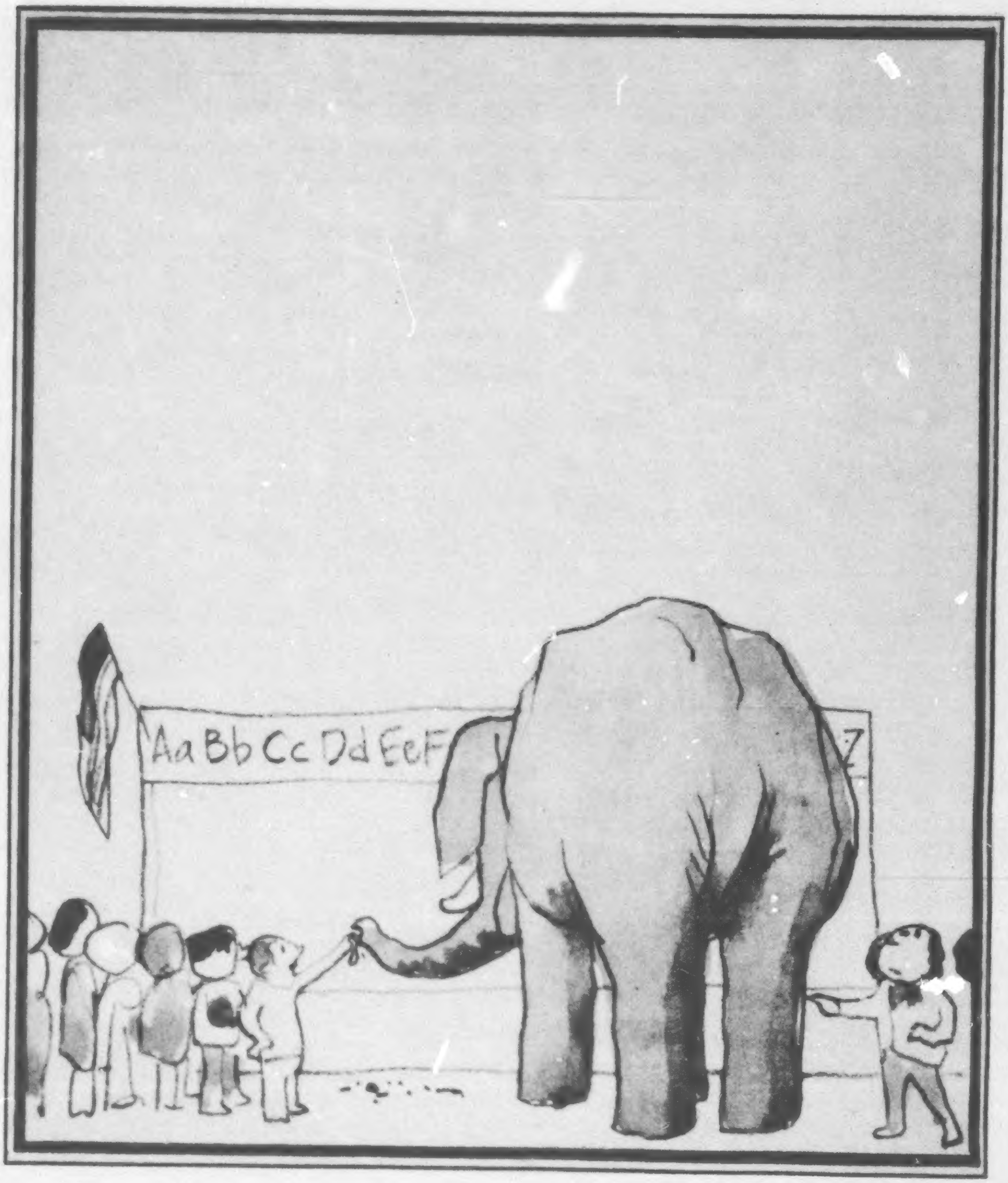
Some teachers don't have time to read a book to the class. Use the tape recorder. Have a parent, or an exceptionally good reader, record a whole book, and let a few kids at a time have a chance to just listen to it, all the way through.



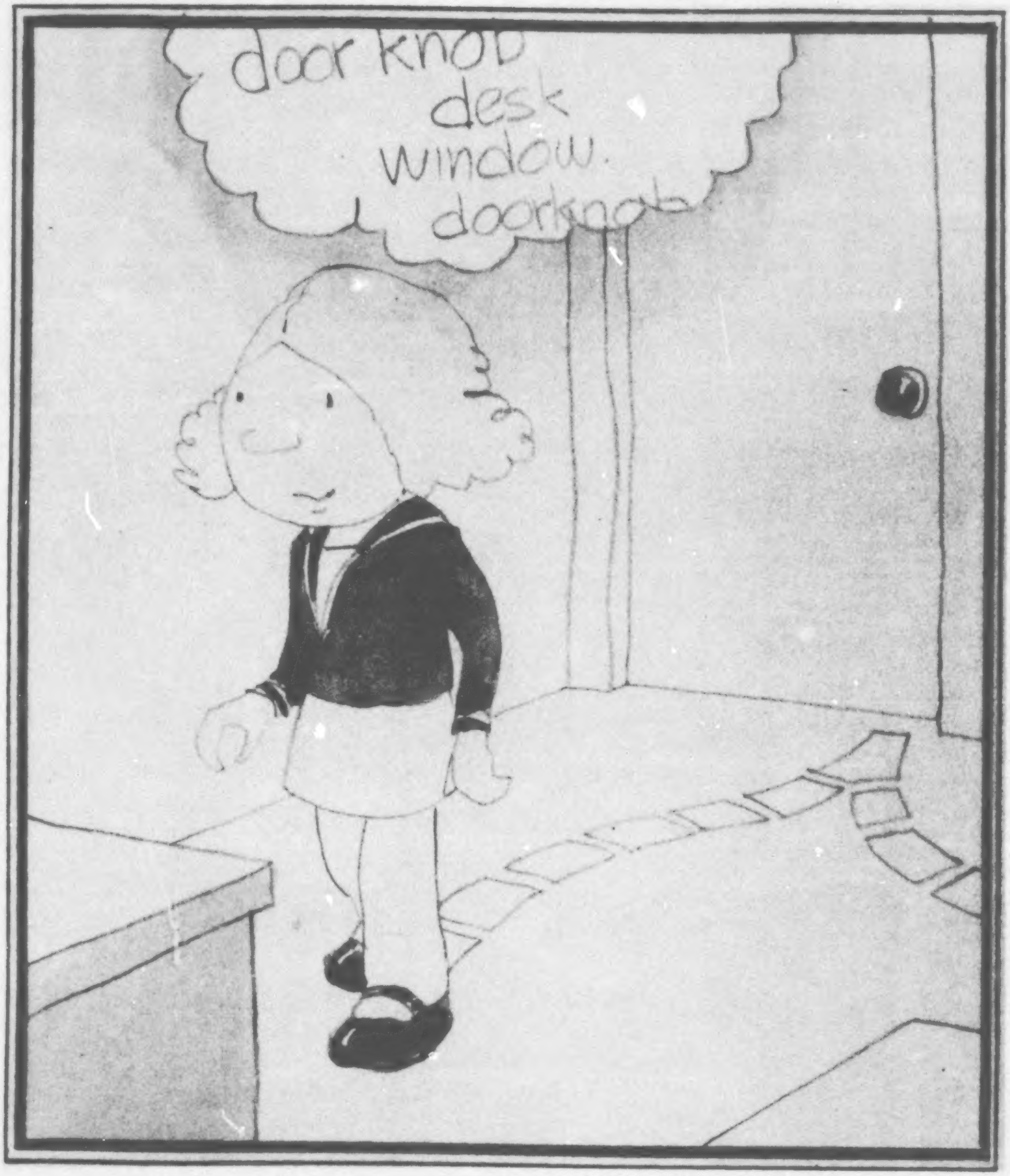
Gerbils and guinea pigs are lively, fun to watch, and require a cage cleaning every few days, clean water daily and food daily. They can be handled by the kids, but beware of mauling! They need home care on weekends, either at the home of the teacher, or at a student's home. Don't go off and forget your classroom pet for a weekend...you might find a dead pet on Monday morning.

The responsibility of classroom pets must rest with the kids in class, but you have to be aware of the pet and its safety.

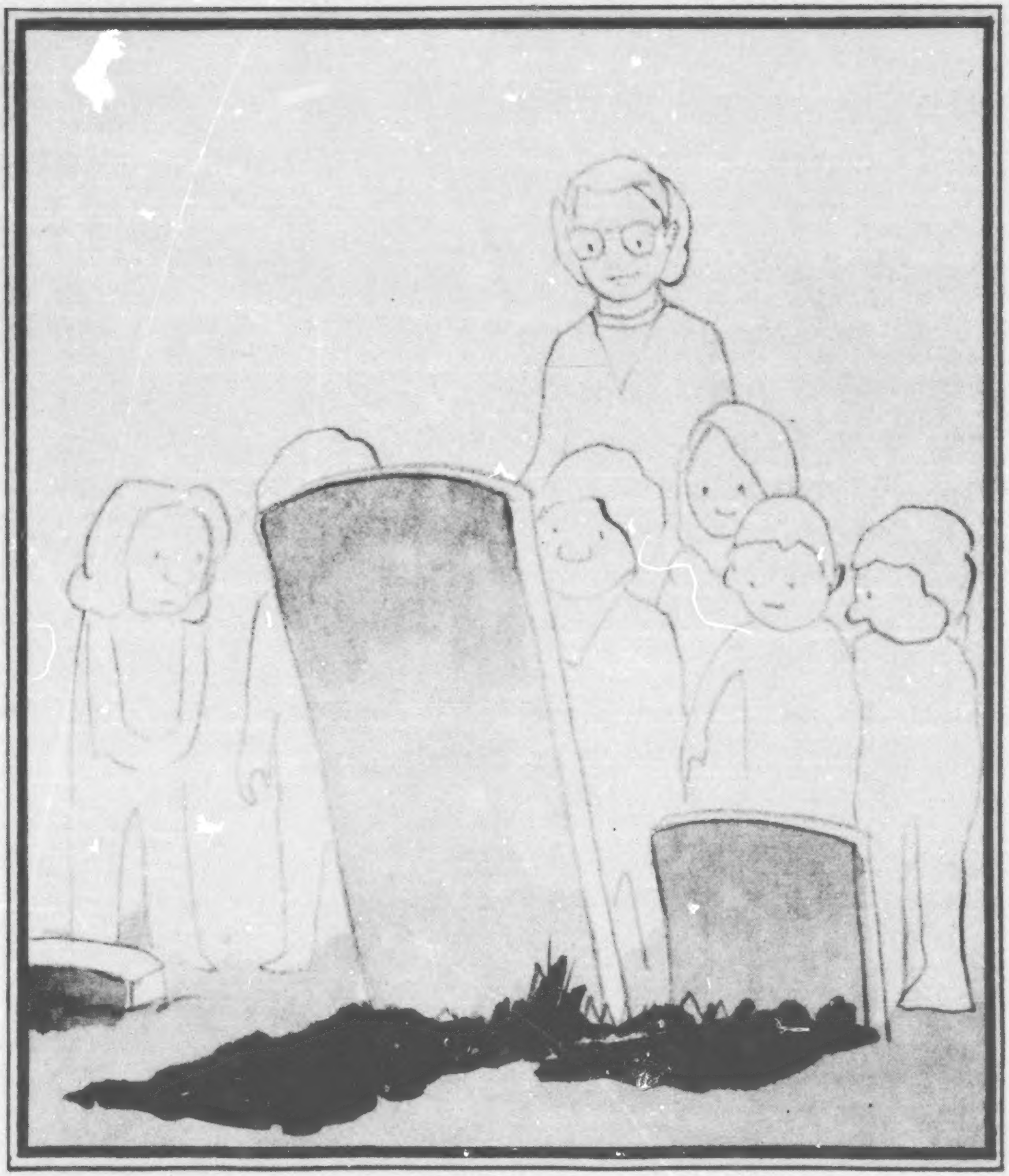
If having pets in school appeals to you, please read up on the care necessary, and have a booklet or 2 on the care and feeding of your particular pet available for the class to read, one at a time. Some pets eat their babies...fish, gerbils. Some fish eat other things in a tank, and a salt water fish tank, wonderful if you live near the sea, is a constant struggle for survival on the part of the inhabitants.


Aa Bb Cc Dd EeF
Z

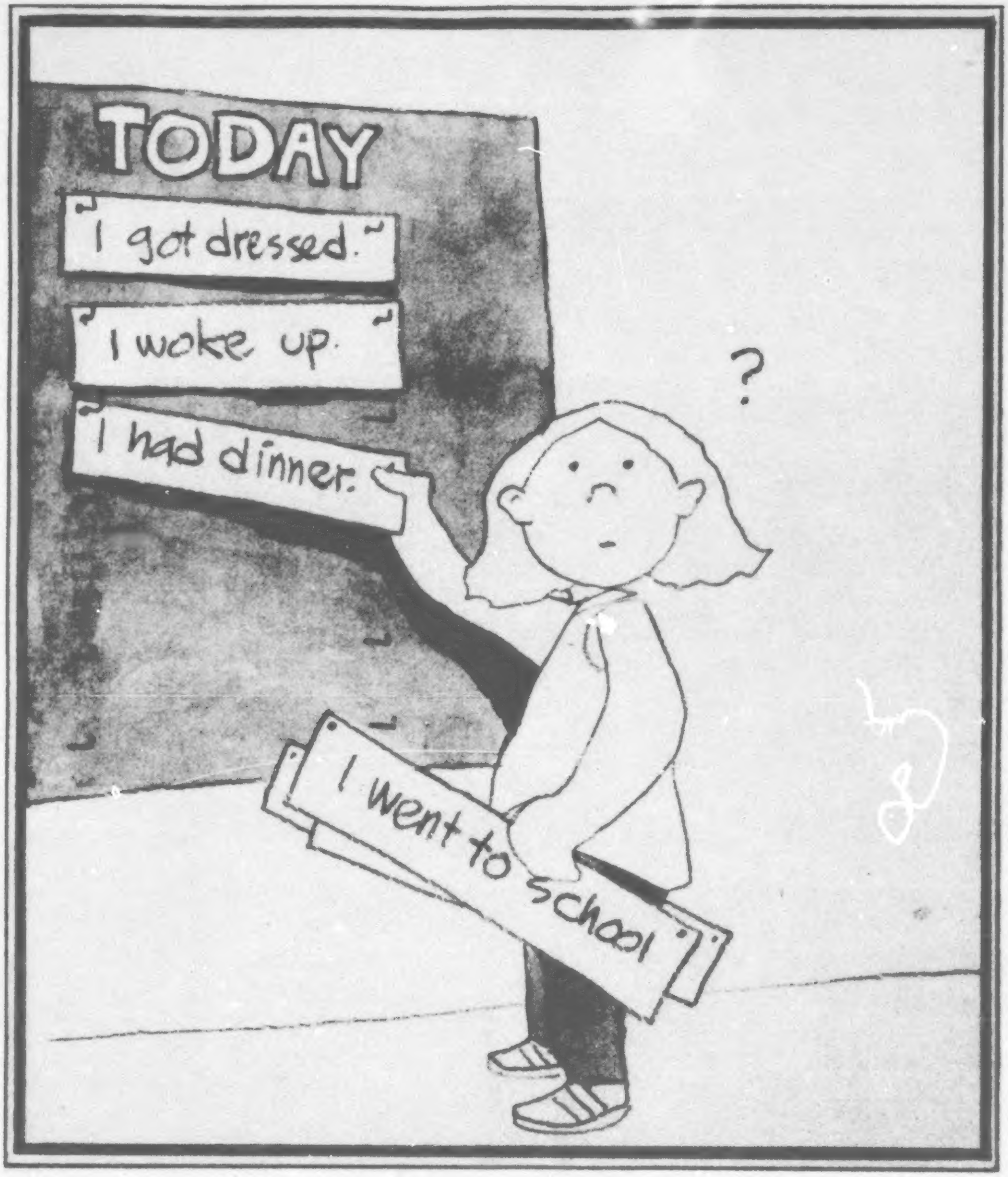
Teachers always complain that kids don't follow directions, but this is a skill that really **CAN** BE TAUGHT, AND TAUGHT ON EVERY GRADE LEVEL. In Kgn., pick out a bright child and say, "Meg, stand up, walk to the closet, touch the doorknob, walk around my desk once, then go back to your seat and sit down." The next day, change both the child and the directions you give. As you progress through the class, you'll find kids having difficulties in following what you've said, so give those people many opportunities to do one thing at a time. Whisper (to save embarassment in front of the class) to them, one at a time, and work from one thing to several. Many kids have **NEVER** HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO FOLLOW DIRECTIONS AT HOME, AND THEY NEED THIS CHANCE. Don't forget the kids who can follow directions...they still enjoy being called on and should have some opportunities.


door knob
desk
window.
doorknob

If you are lucky enough to have an old cemetery in the area, you might interest your students in reading the tombstones, some of which will be inscribed with poetry. Constructing a character from the epitaph might lead to some serious research about the dear departed, the era during which she lived, and the area where she lived. This is suitable for English or Social Studies or creative writing or lots of other things you might never have thought about before.

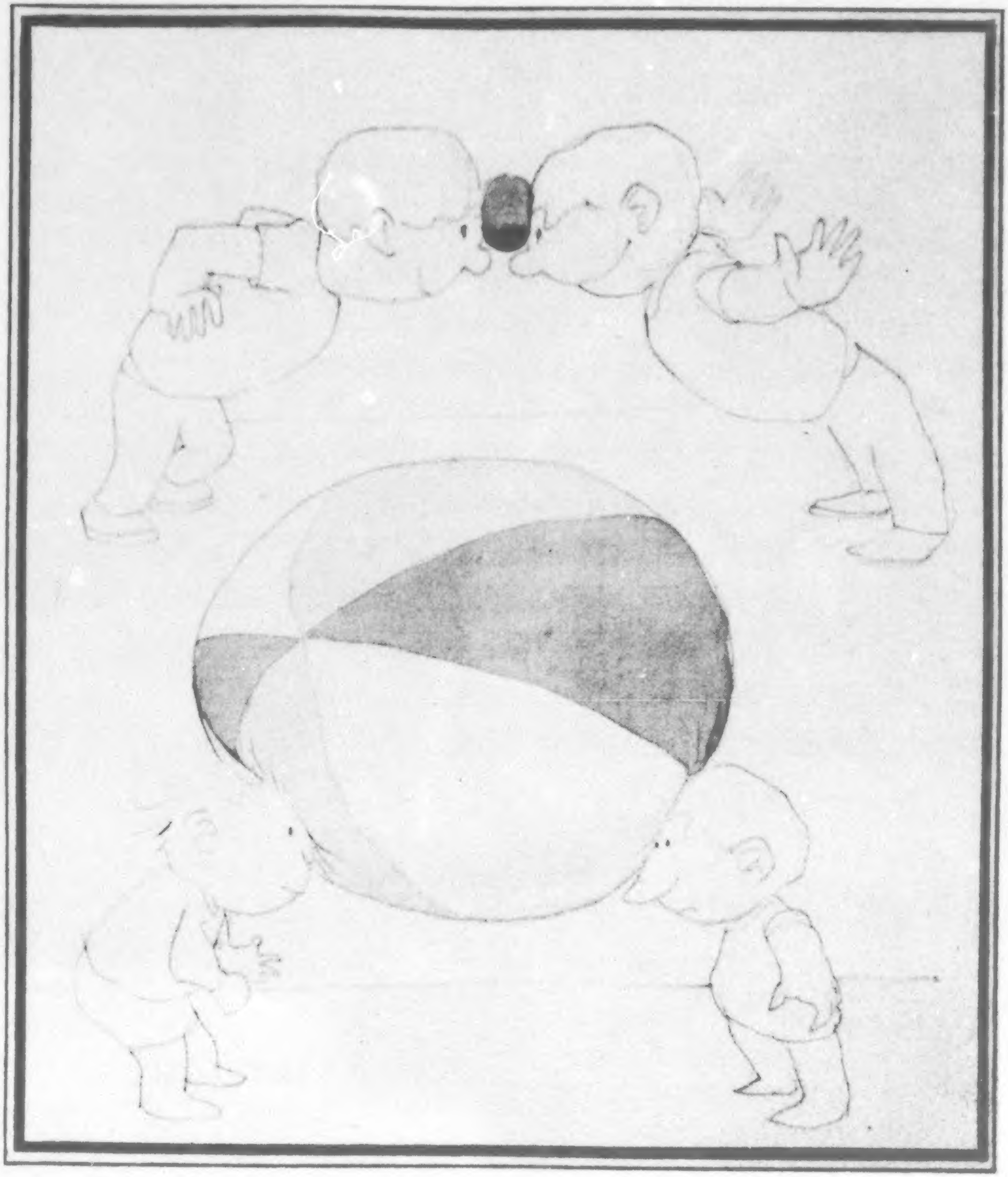


Putting things in proper sequence is very difficult for some kids. It can be practiced, however, starting with a few sentences on the board about the daily routine.
I went to school.
I woke up.
I ate breakfast.
I got dressed.
That's quite simple, but may need repeating until the kids get the gist of order. Then, switch to a short story from an old workbook. Project it on an overhead projector. Put some choices on the board, and using both projector and choices, show the kids how to find the sequence by looking at the projected story. But keep it simple at first, limited to a paragraph or two.

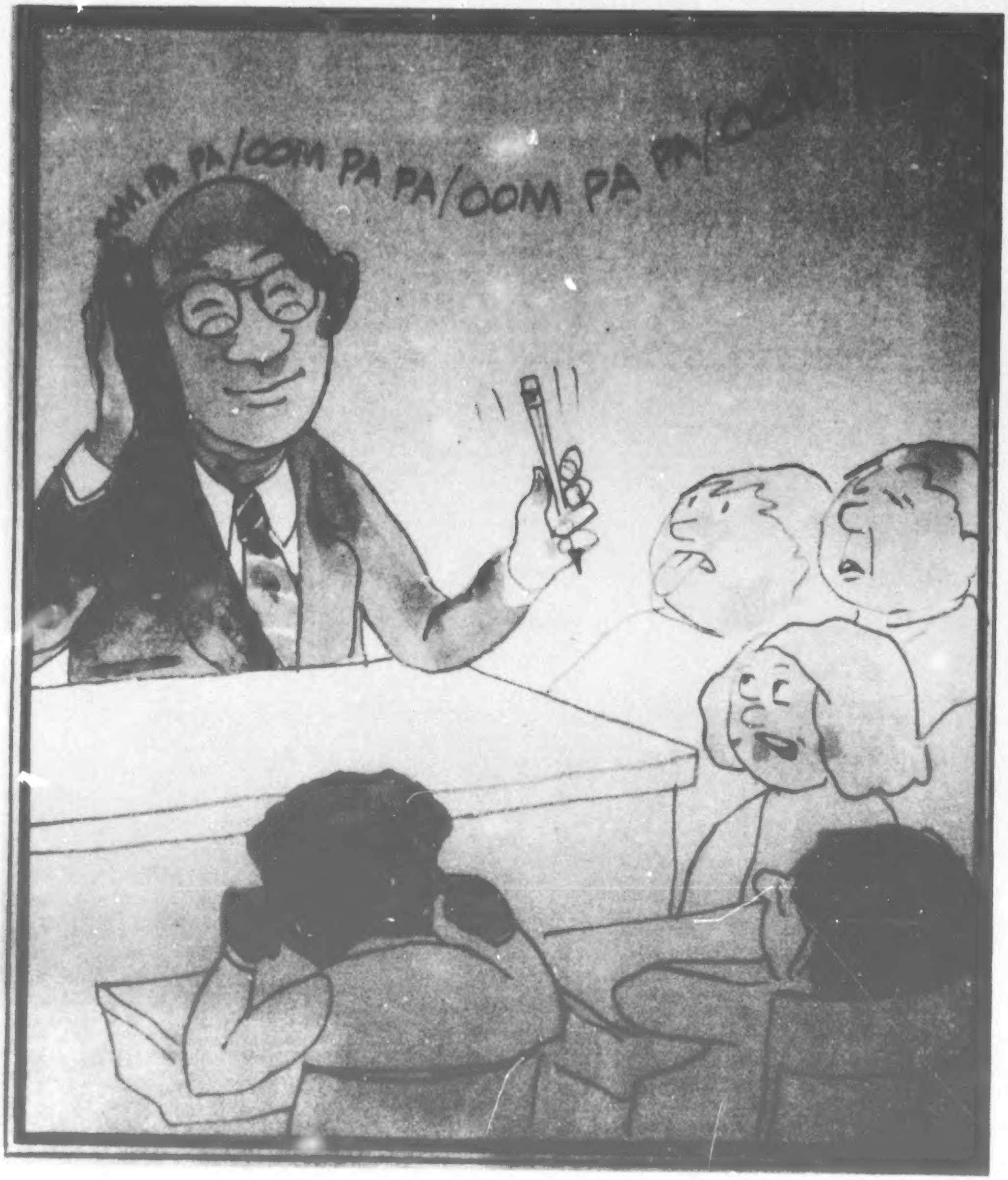


TODAY
I got dressed.
I woke up.
I had dinner.
?
I went to school

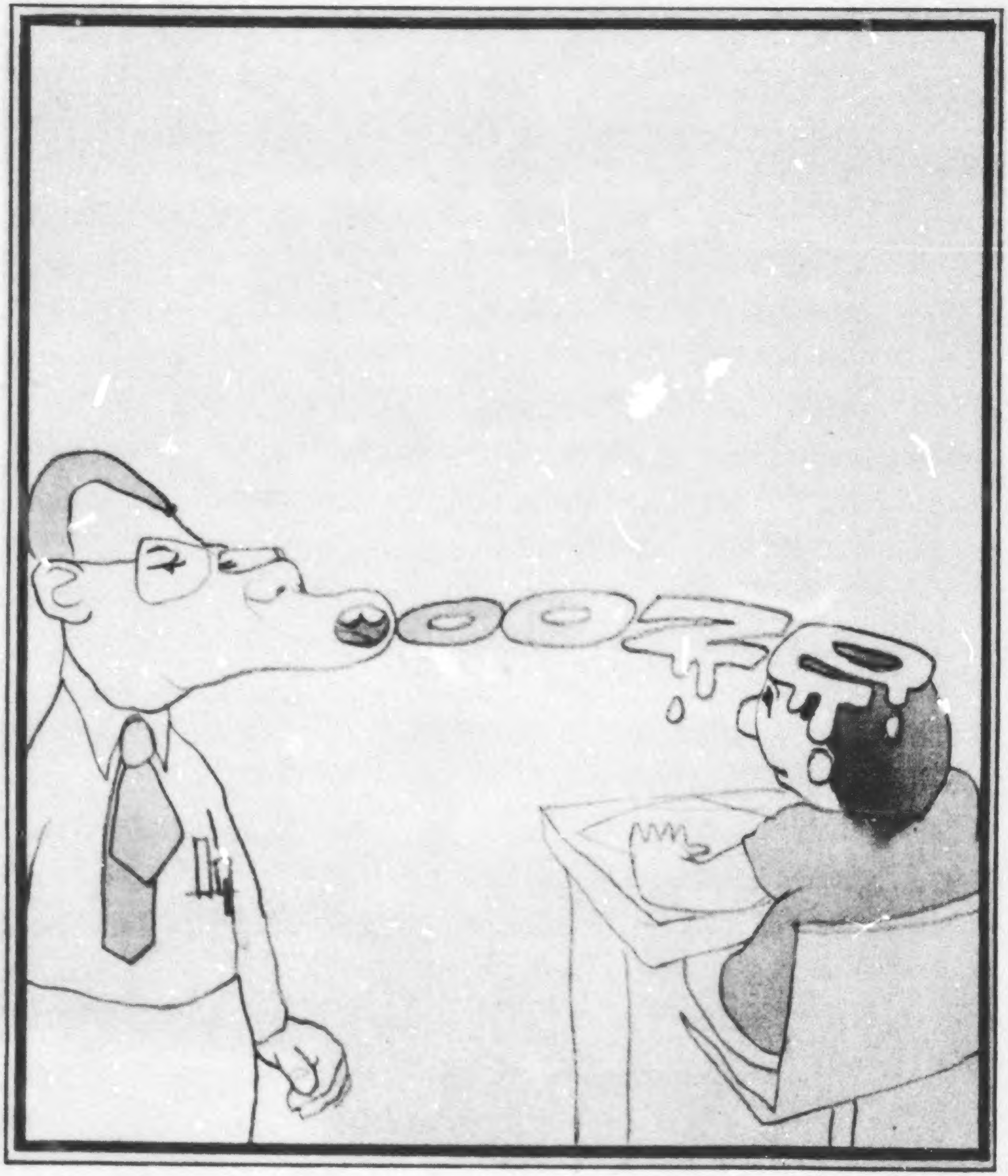
Balance an orange or a tennis ball between the heads of 2 people...head to head, or chin to chin, or hip to hip, or knee to knee. Have them try walking, picking something up, squatting, etc. while keeping the ball from falling. Smaller kids can use a bigger ball. It's great for summer parties at the beach...use balloons there.



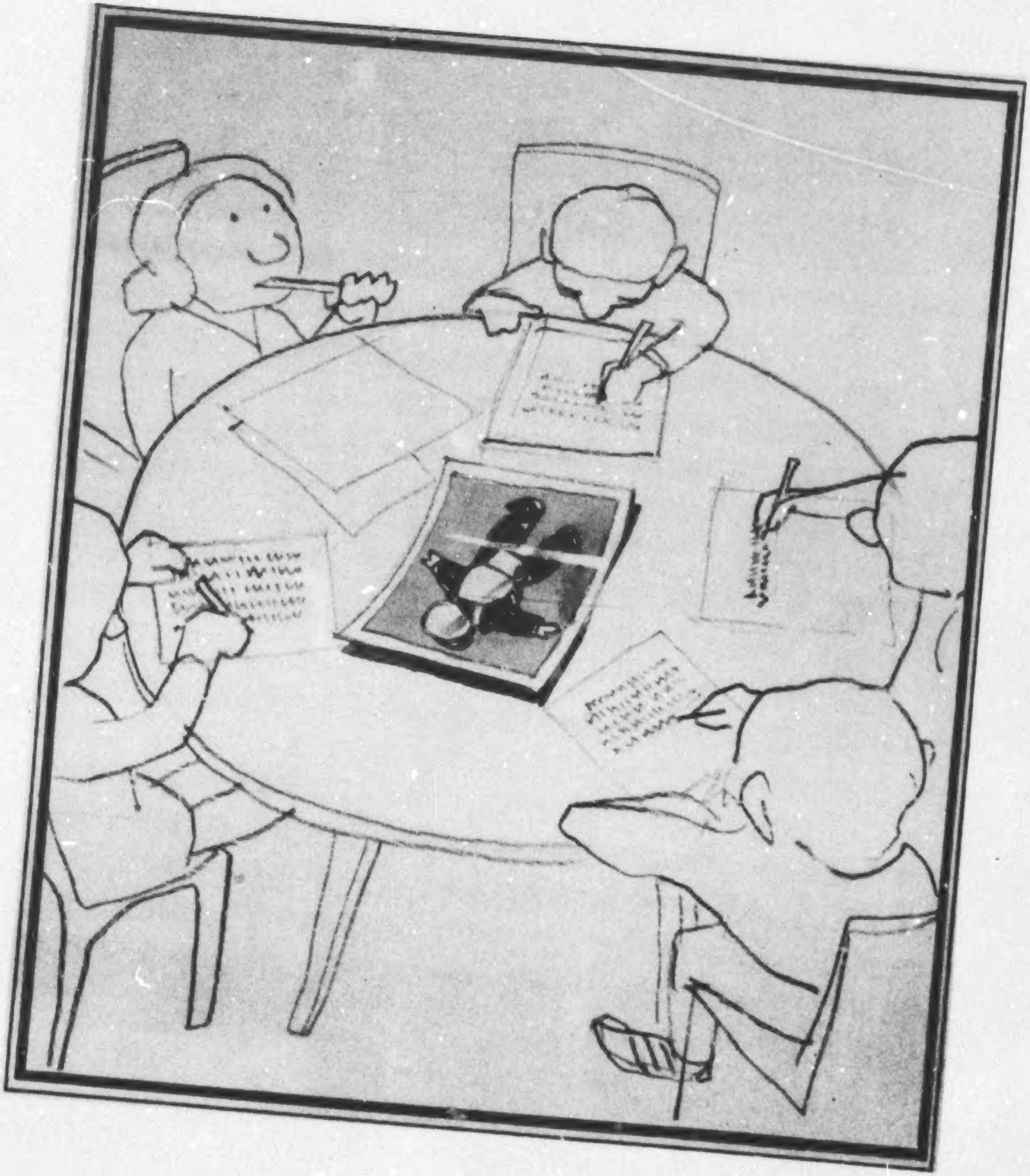
Music in school as sung is always left for the music teacher. Why not present your own songs for the class to learn? If you have favorites, tape them and play the tape every day for a week. By the end of that week everyone will know the song. More than one song a week can take more time than you wish to use, but just one song will take less than 5 minutes of your time and will build a delightful repertoire for the students. I have used a group of sea chanties, Broadway shows, and several Muppet albums over the years. The variety is vast! But it's your show, not the kids', and you can reject any music they might bring in. I am not for loud rock...the kids can hear that at home if they wish.


OOM PA PA/OOM PA PA/OOM PA PA/OOM

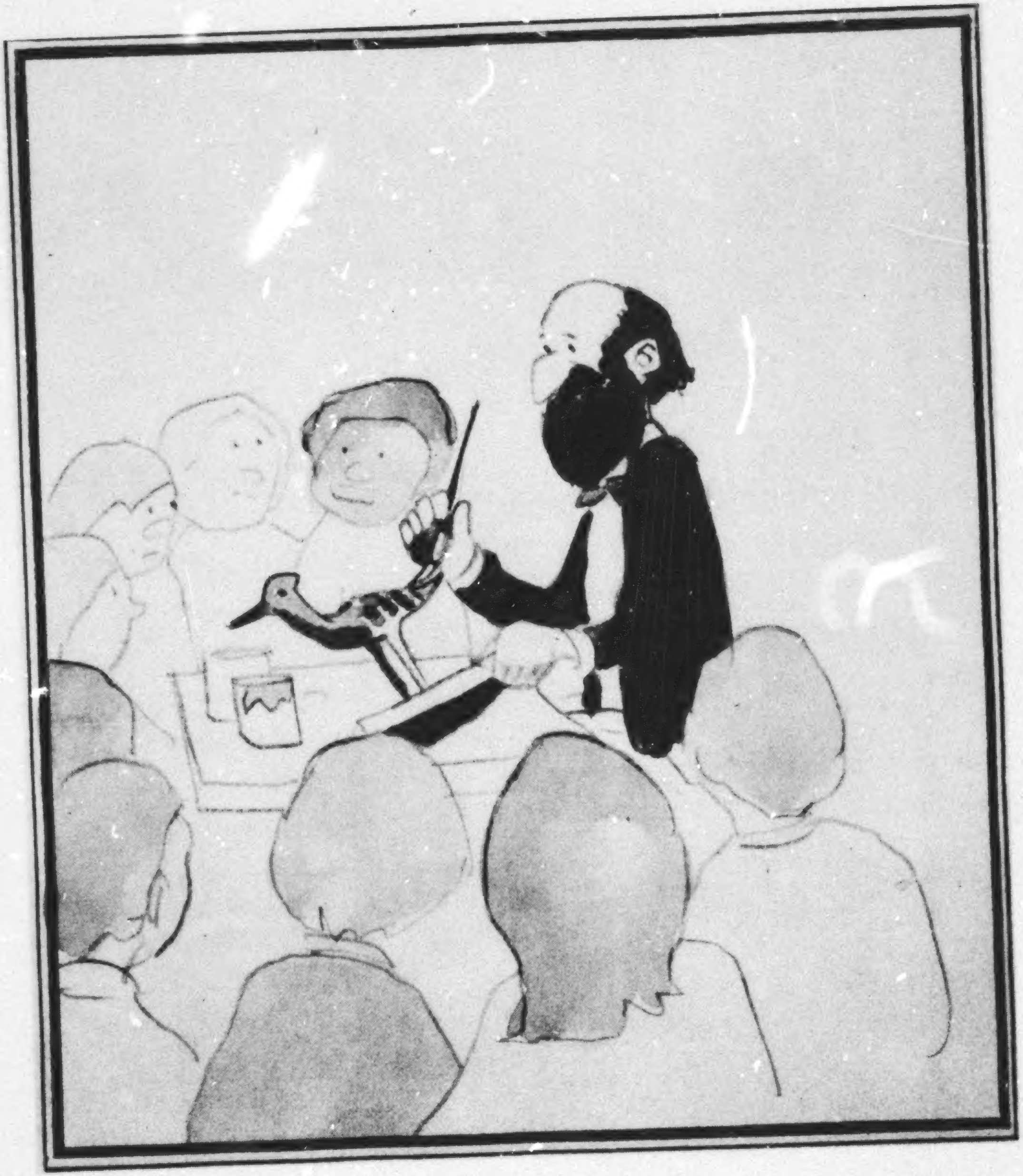
Increase the vocabulary of your students by pointing out to them the sounds of words...slime, ooze, clump, surface, etc. Use the word you introduce in at least 5 sentences the day you introduce it. Hearing something once just doesn't do much for eager, learning minds, but the repetition usually works. Slip new words onto spelling lists now and then too.



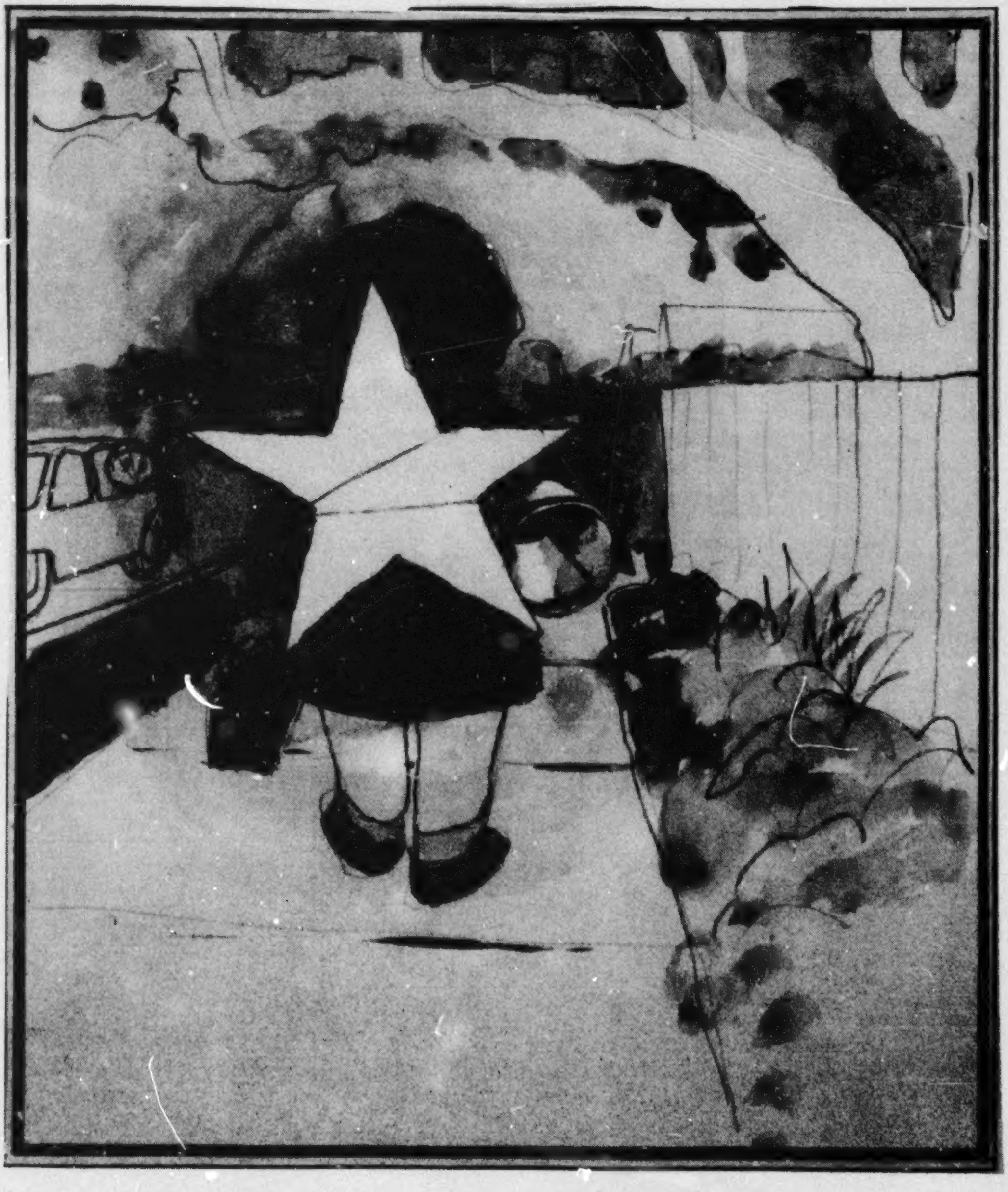
Writing original stories or essays or descriptions is very difficult for some kids. Keep an envelope of really exciting pictures, and occasionally let the kids pick one out and write a story about that picture. The results will amaze you! Sometimes a group working on the same picture will turn out interesting stories, and if 2 groups work on 2 pictures and swap after 20 minutes, the finished product might be great fun.



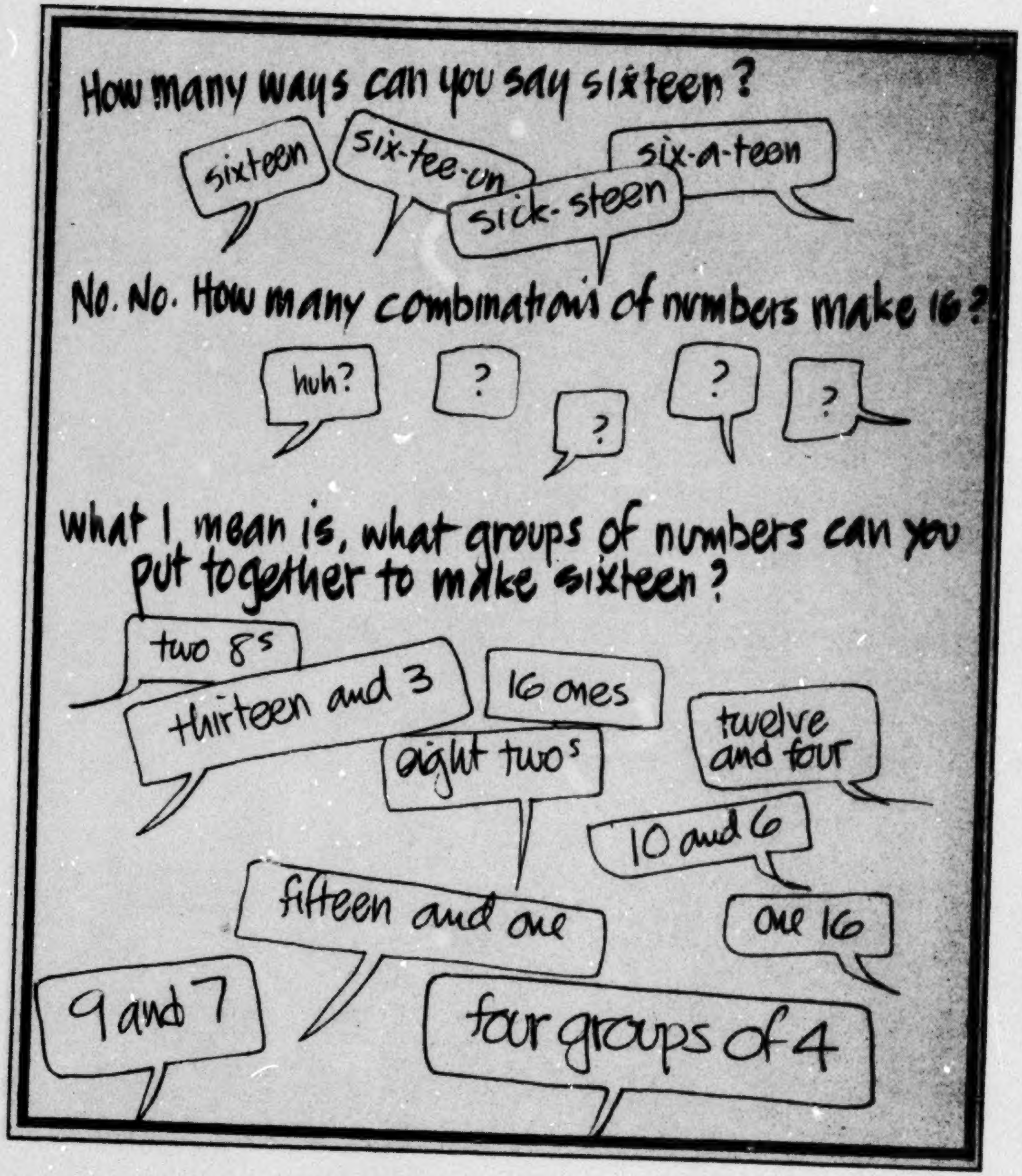
Invite parents to come to school to demonstrate their crafts. Invite the kids to ask questions about them. Having several crafts persons scheduled for the same day works well. Often, several classes can work on craft projects together.



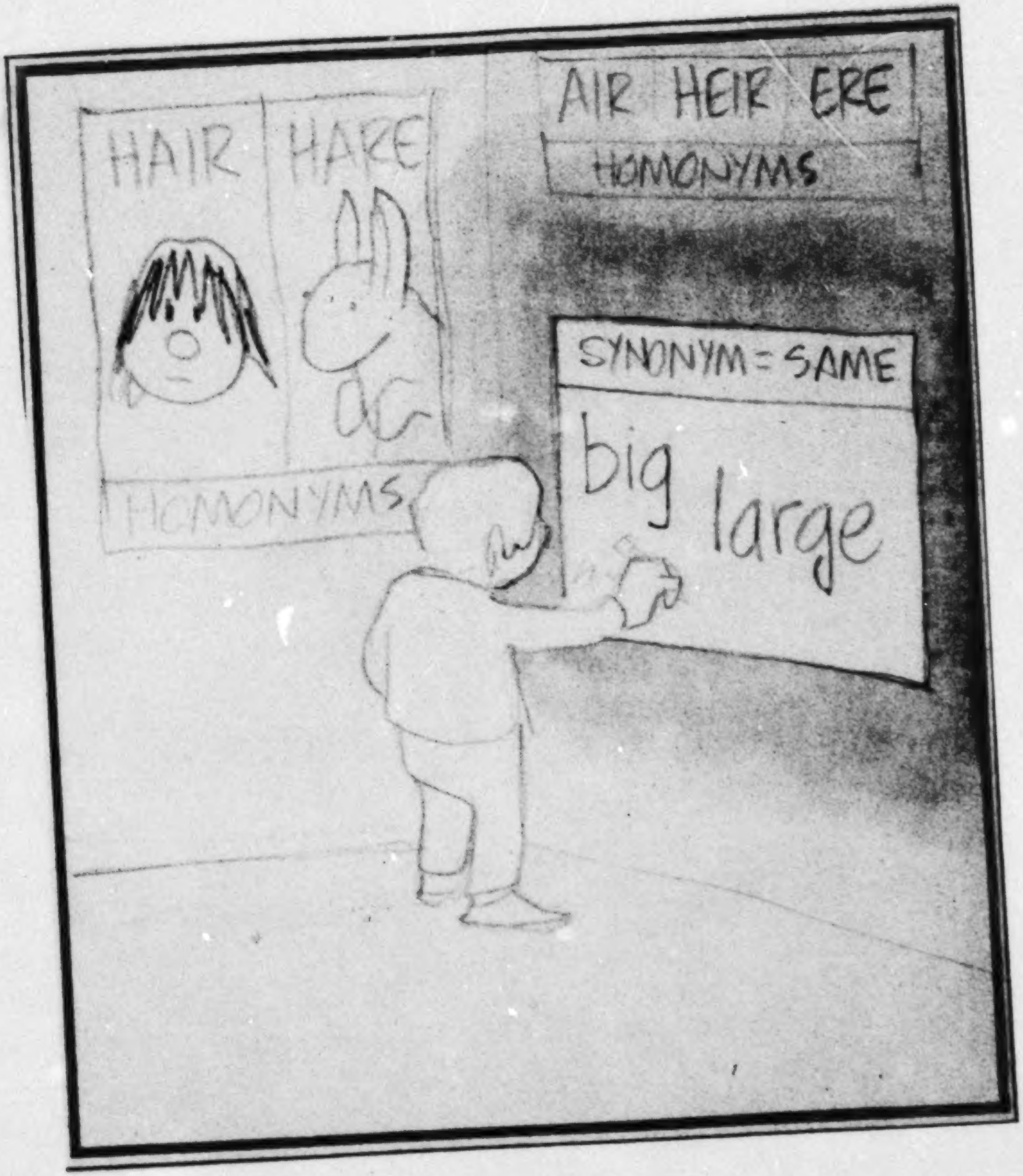
THIS WEEK‘S SPECIAL is not a supermarket buy, but one member of the class. Each Friday, choose the **SPECIAL** for the following week, the **STAR.** Give that child an information sheet to fill out containing questions like: date and place of birth; address; favorite pets; favorite foods, colors, songs, movies, TV shows; ask the **STAR** to bring in recent and baby photos, and anything that makes him special to share with the class. On Monday make a bulletin board with all the information you have and share this with the class. The following Friday, present the Star with the special bulletin board to take home, and draw a new name for the following week. Is **THAT** an ego booster!!!



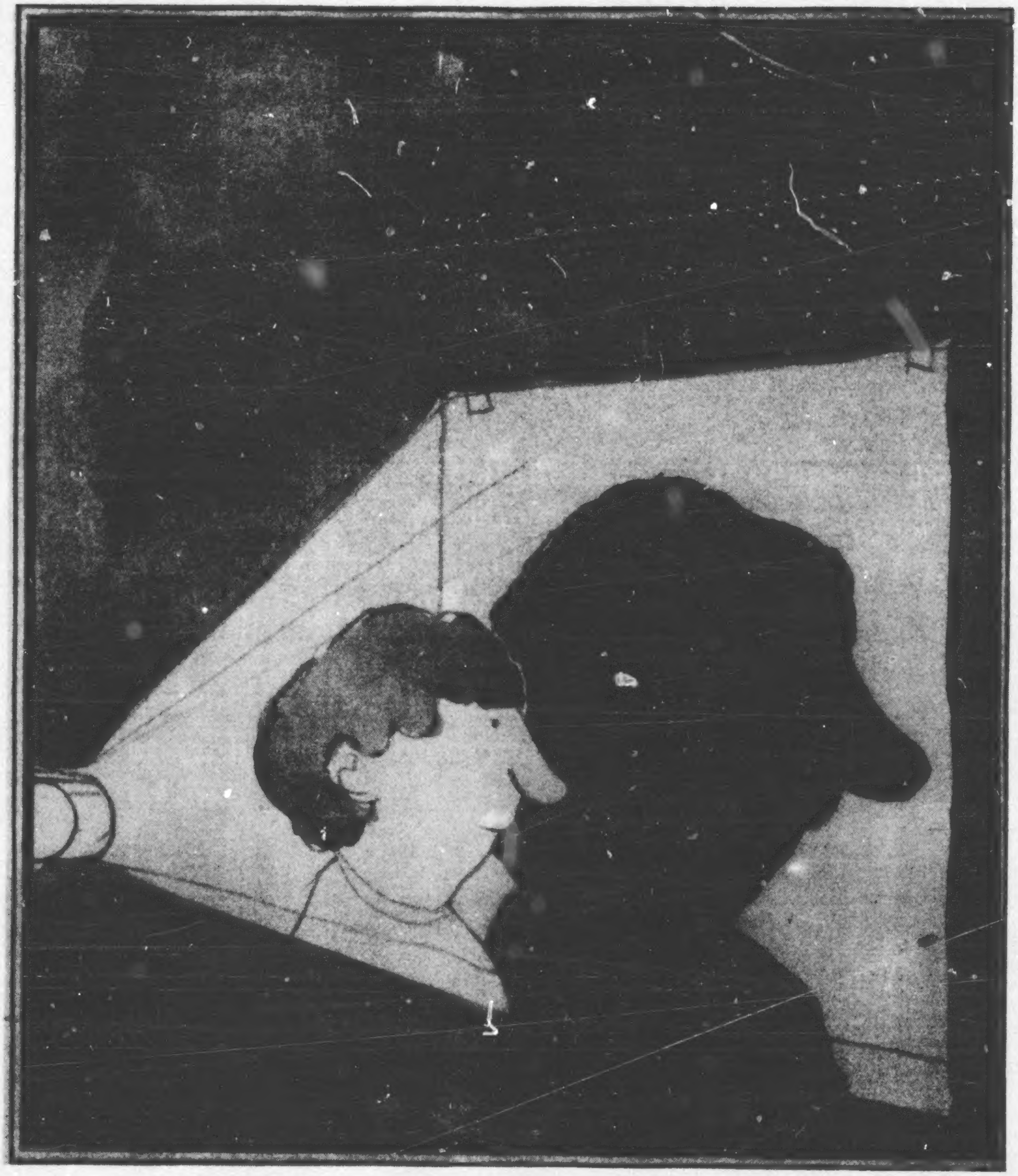
Have you considered the fact that a kid can usually answer a question if he really understands the question?


How many ways can you say sixteen?
sixteen
six-tee-un
sick-steen
six-a-teen
No. No. How many combinations of numbers make 16?
huh?
?
?
?
?
what I mean is, what groups of numbers can you put together to make sixteen?
two 8s
thirteen and 3
16 ones
twelve and four
eight twos
10 and 6
fifteen and one
one 16
9 and 7
four groups of 4

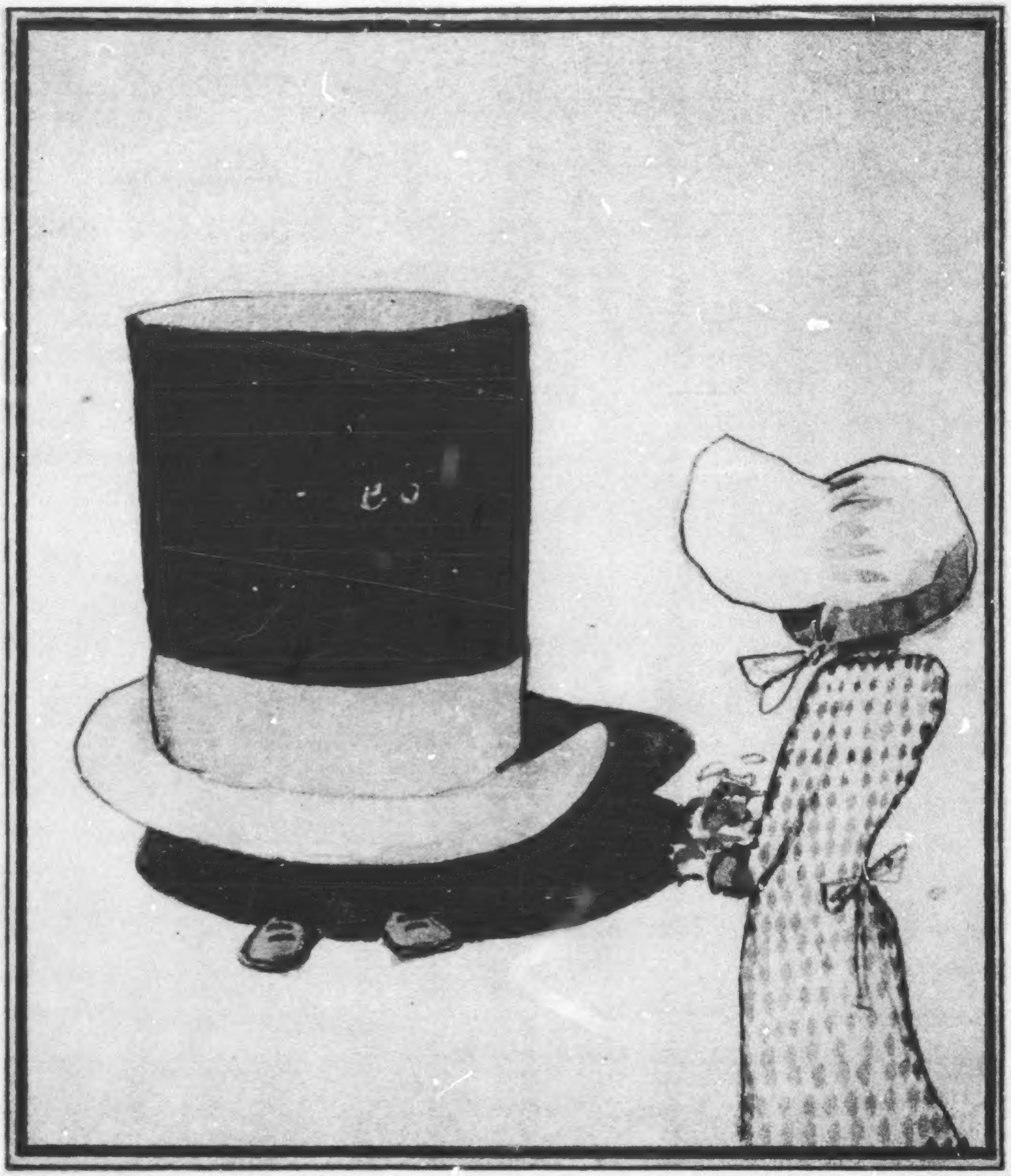
Synonym and same. Both begin with the letter S. Why we can't call them "same" words is beyond me, but give the kids a fair chance at learning what **SYNONYM** means by using it many times and putting up wall charts of both synonyms and homonyms.


HAIR
HARE
HOMONYMS
AIR HEIR ERE
HOMONYMS
SYNONYM = SAME
big
large

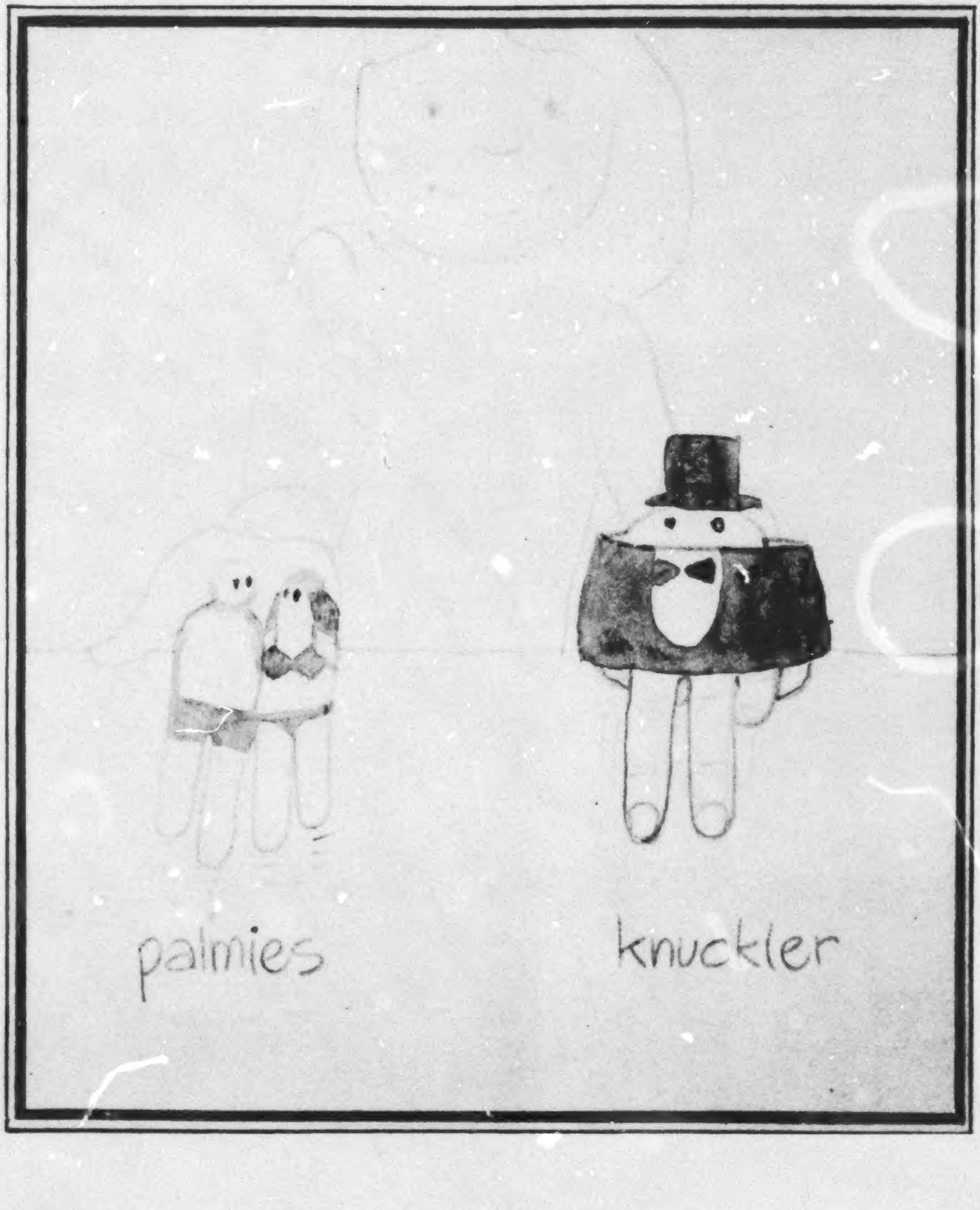
A nice holiday gift for parents or grandparents is a black silhouette mounted on a white background. Having an older student for a helper moves things along quickly. Tape white paper to the wall. Sit the child between the paper and a light source...desk lamp, bulb, etc. Perhaps you can use a slide projector. Trace the outline of the child from shoulders up, cut out the outline, and re-trace on black paper. Mount on heavy white paper.



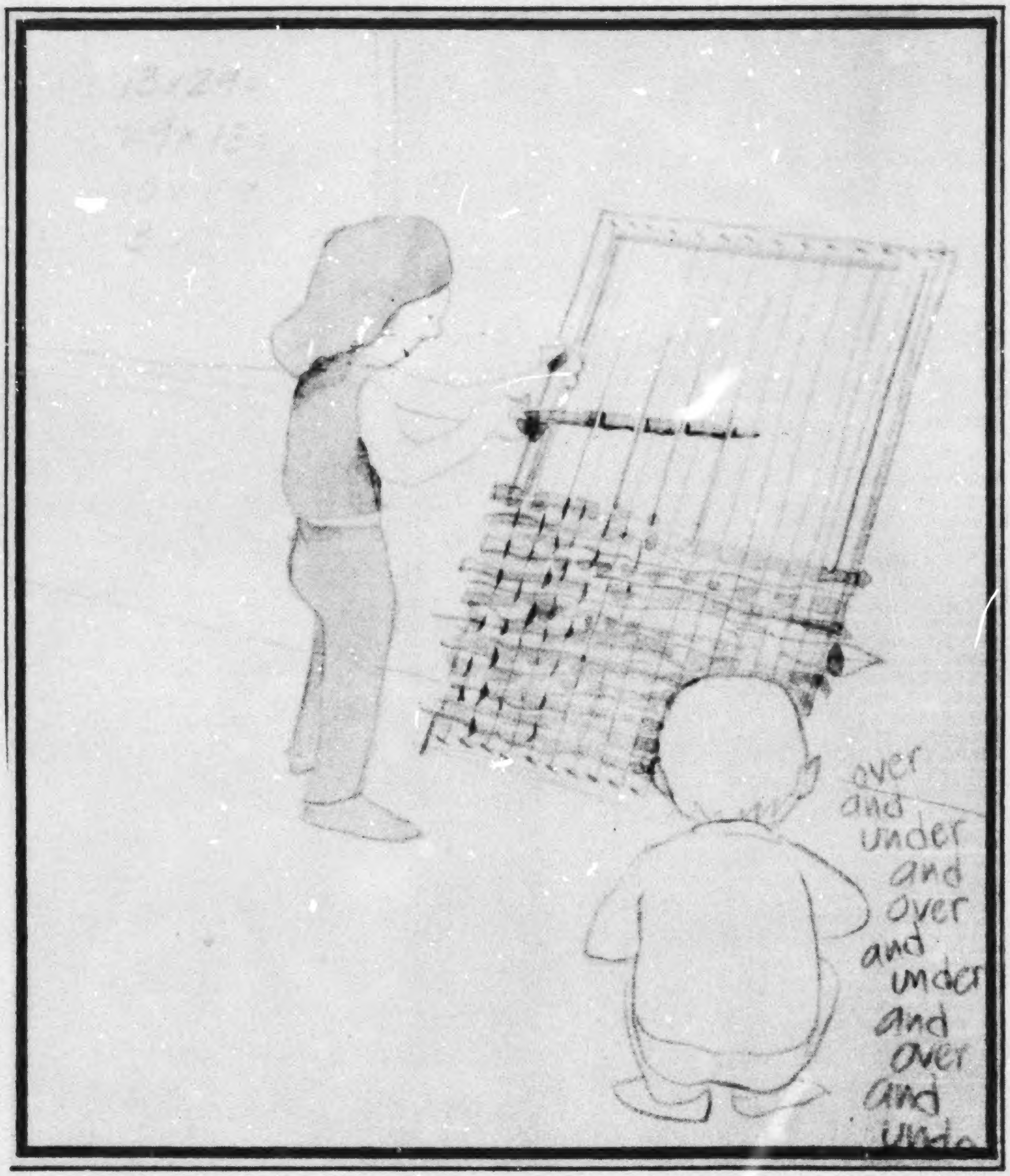
The doldrums of winter sure could use a shot in the arm! With just one week's notice, the school decided to have a **HAT DAY,** a day on which every kid and teacher and anyone else connected with the school wore a hat. The day was called Bartholomew Cubbins Day, in honor of the Dr. Seuss book. Every class heard the story: for the teachers who didn't have time to read it, several taped cassettes were circulated so that everyone knew the story. People brought in several hats and decorations for them; several classes had special contests (best looking hat, prettiest, funniest, etc.) and the entire school had a parade to show everyone the hats. You'd be surprised at the number of book titles related to hats that the kids can tell you about. Posters appeared all week long announcing and reminding everyone of Bartholemew Cubbins Day, and the day was such a success that it became an annual event.



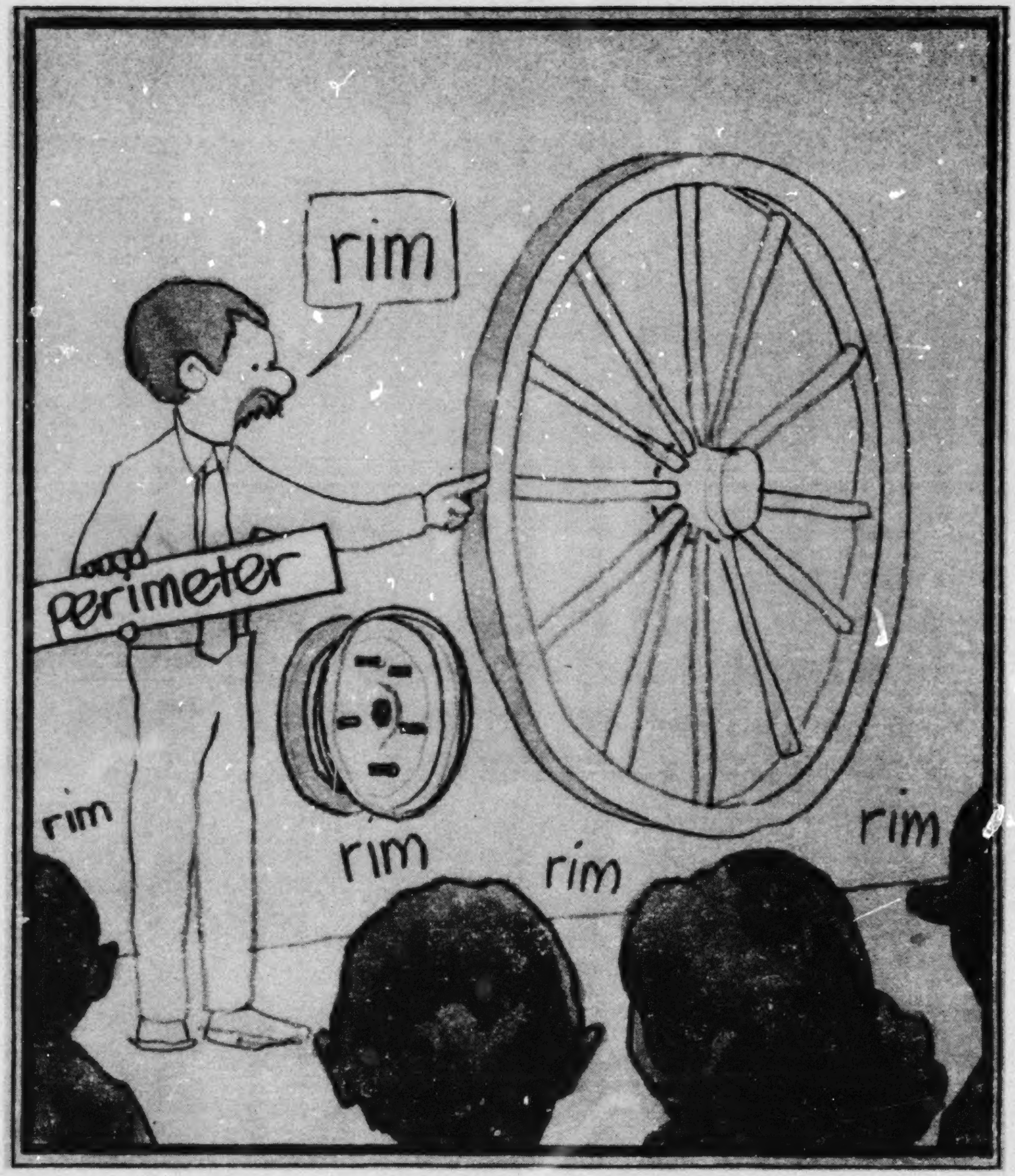
One day the entire second grade had a puppet day, but the puppets were hands. Talk about, ''Let your fingers do the walking''! Each hand had a face drawn on it, and suddenly the kids were designing costumes made of tissue paper and toilet paper. Hands appeared dressed as balerinas, Indians, mice, you name it! Each puppet voice was high and squeaky, and all schoolwork that day was done by puppets, not kids. It just sort of happened...it wasn't planned, it evolved. It was delightful.


palmies
knuckler

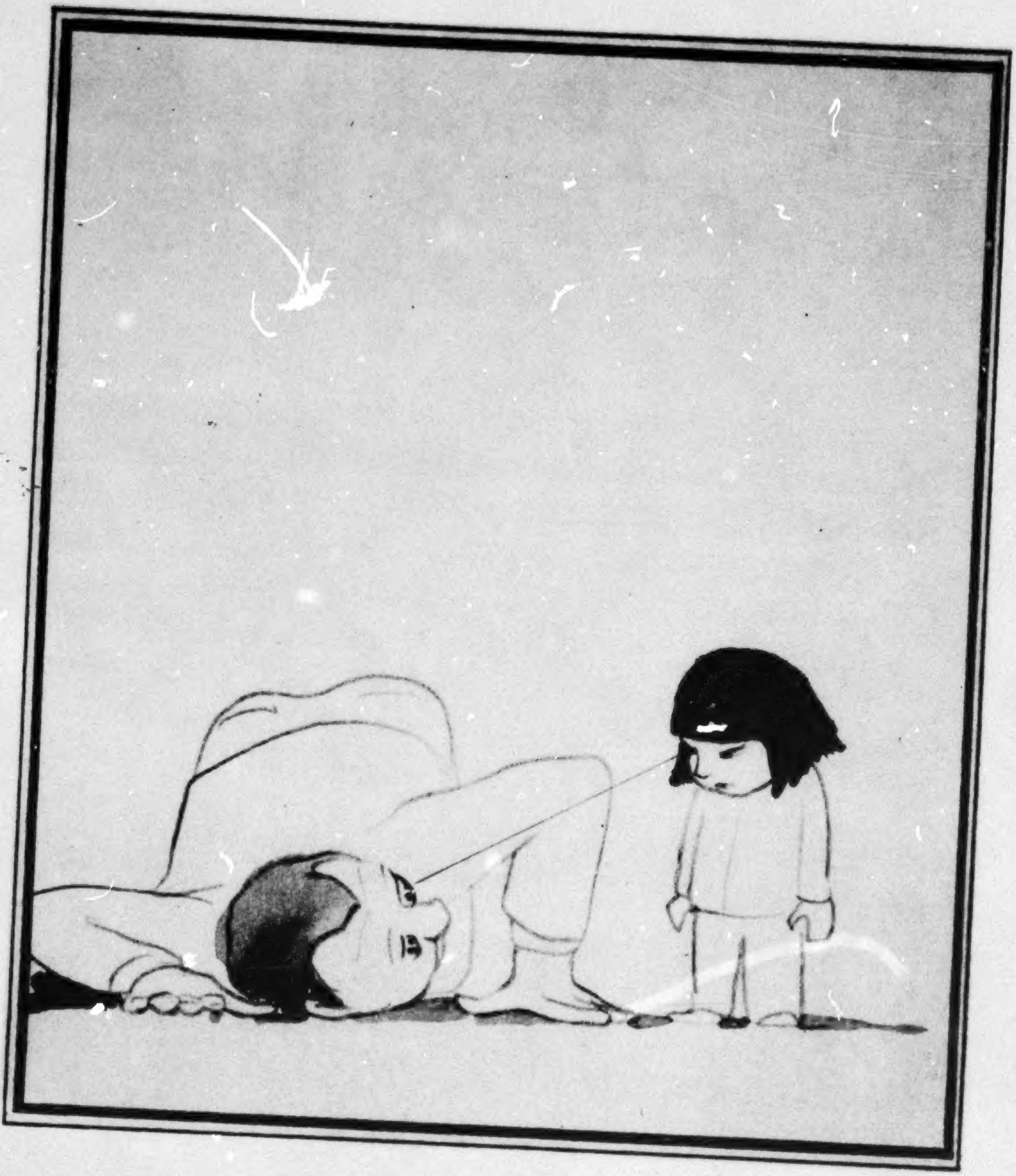
Weaving on vertical looms allows many children to work on a project. Use straight branches for top and bottom, tack ½'' strips of wood as long as you wish, just to hold the end wood apart. String the loom with heavy twine. Weave with grasses, bits of twine, very thin branches or vines, anything available. You'll have very interesting effects, and everyone can do it.


over
and
under
and
over
and
under
and
over
and
unde

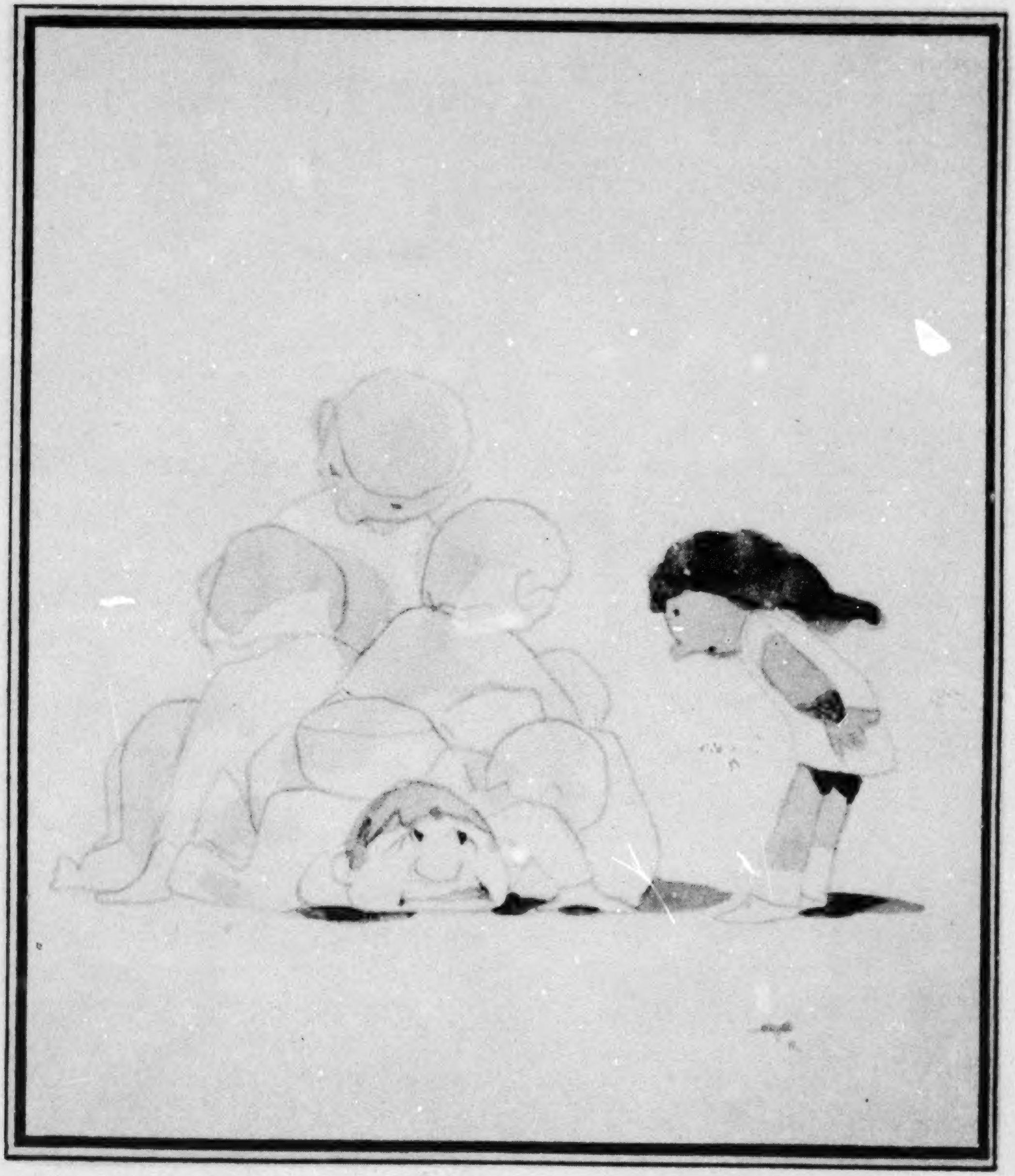
Perimeter is a **RIM.** Show that to the kids. PE**RIM**ETER.


rim
perimeter
rim
rim
rim
rim

Working with children whose first language is not English has helped me really understand what kids understand. Body language comes through magnificently in another language, and although eye contact is sometimes not part of another culture, I can often actually **SEE** whether my student understands. This works well with kids whose **FIRST** language is English too, but is difficult when working with a whole big class. It's ideal for one on one.

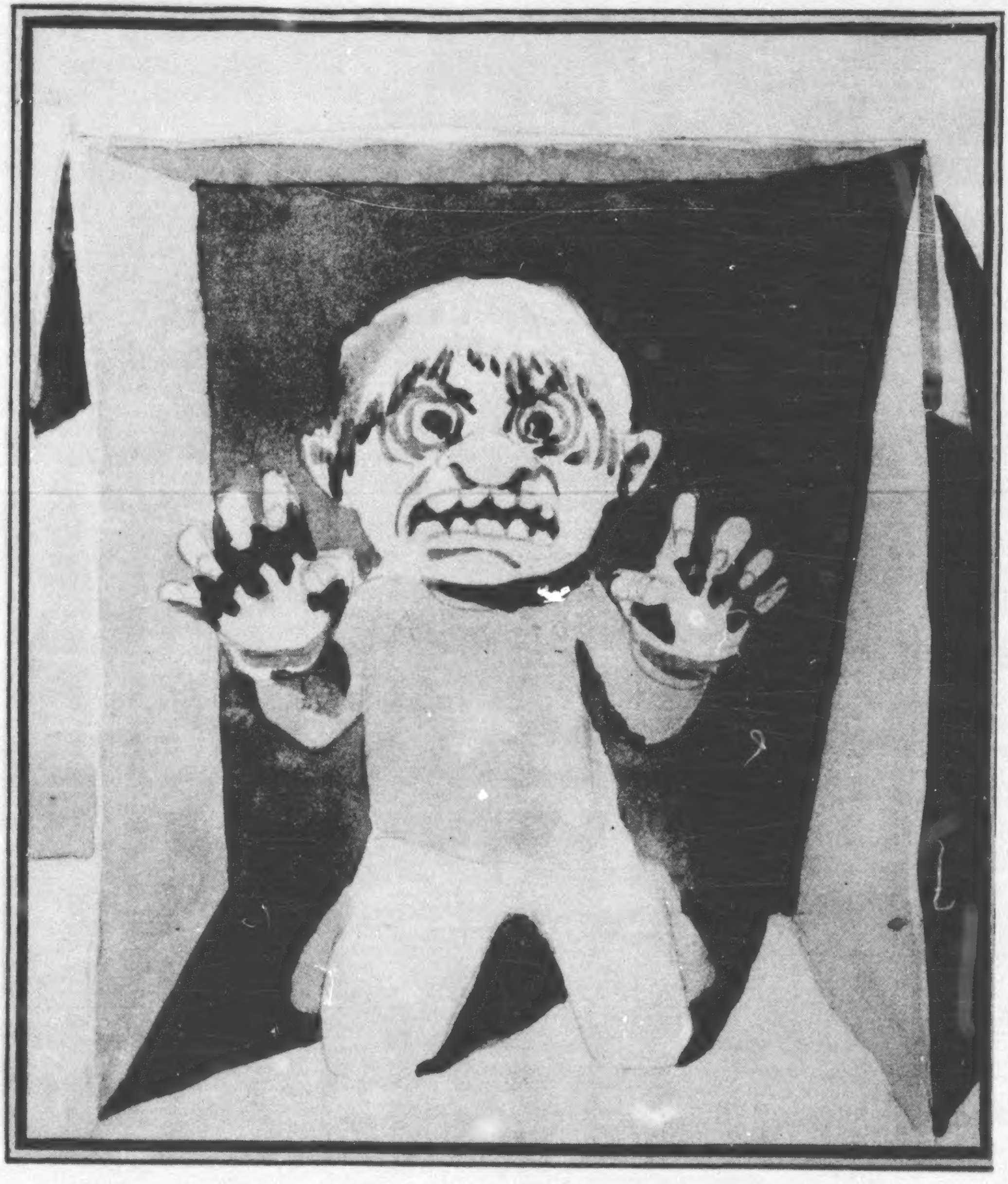


It may be very worthwhile for you to instruct your students to stand up for their rights. When some nursery school kids were climbing all over each other, the bottom body was obviously in distress. One small girl leaned over and said to him, "If you don't like it, tell them all to get off!" The lad did just that, and everyone got off, not unhappily, not happily. They just got off.

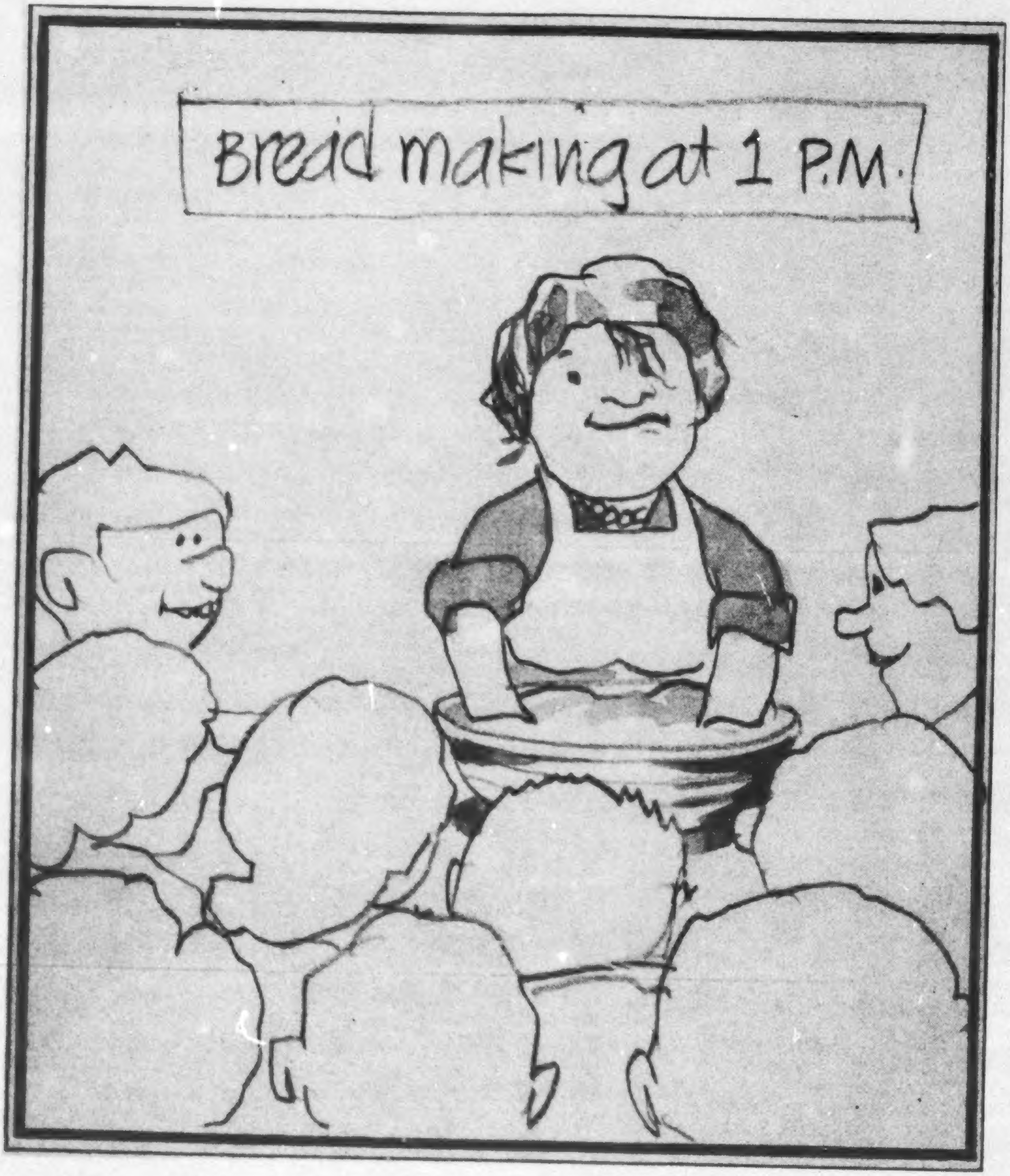


Occasionally, and I hope it's rarely, a kid will have a really **BAD** day. I mean, **BAAADD.** You, the teacher, must use great restraint in dealing with this problem. And the fastest and best way I've ever heard of is to quickly isolate the kid. I had a nice big box in my room, called the **ISOLATION BOOTH.** It had many uses. Sometimes a kid would climb in just to read quietly. But it really came in handy for one lad whenever he completely lost control of himself. I'd just point to the **ISOLATION BOOTH,** and he'd get in, rather relieved that he didn't have to make a decision while he was going through temporary insanity. After a few minutes, he'd come out and rejoin the class.

At home, faced with a kid having problems, sending her off to her room ("Go to your room!") gives the kid a chance to return to normal.

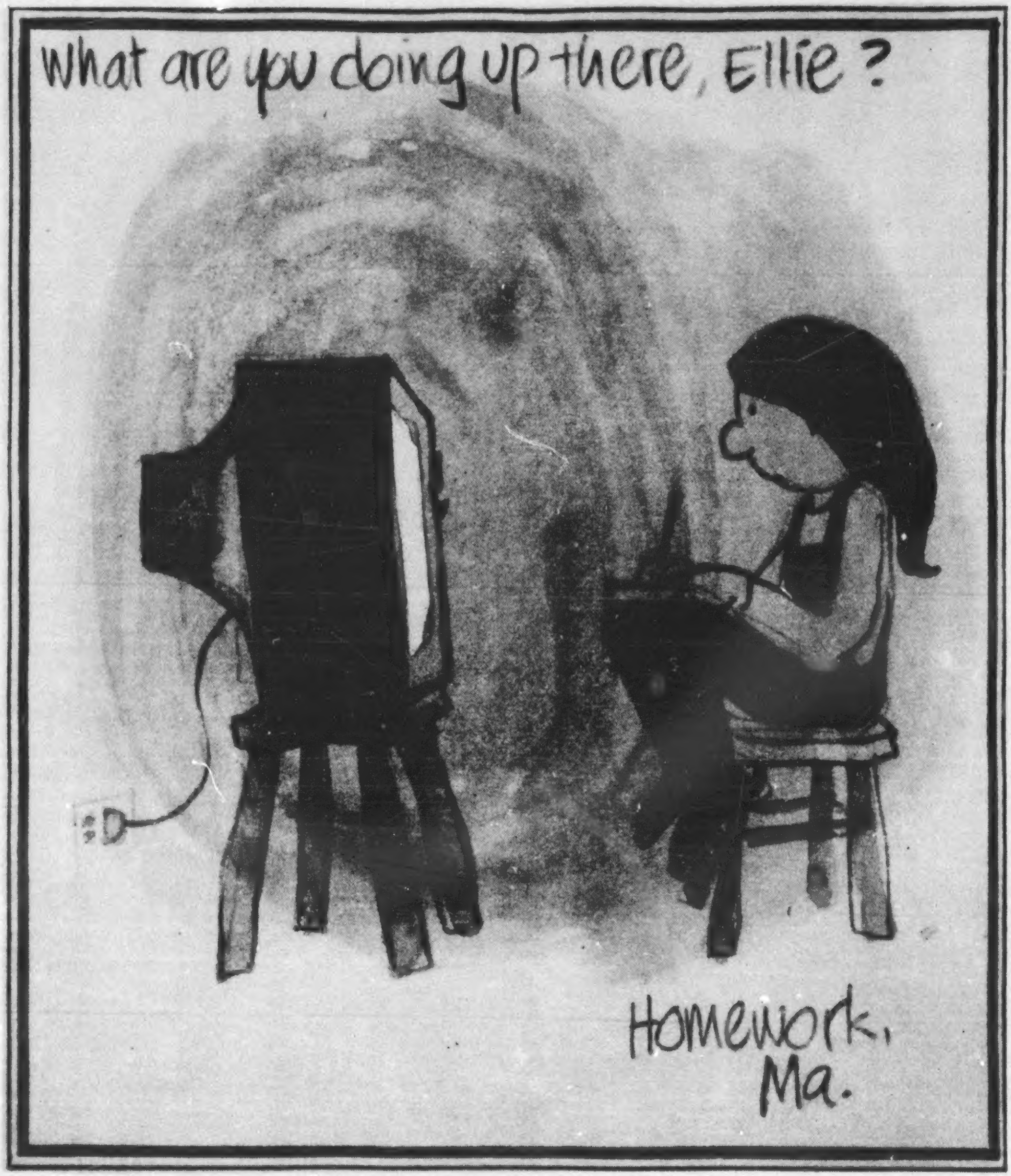


If you're lucky enough to have a kitchen available at school, perhaps you can recruit a local breadmaker to come to school and demonstrate the art. The wheat berries (that's wheat before it is ground into flour) can be ground in the classroom, the importance of kneading can be discussed (and the reason to wash hands before kneading), and the end product can be eaten.

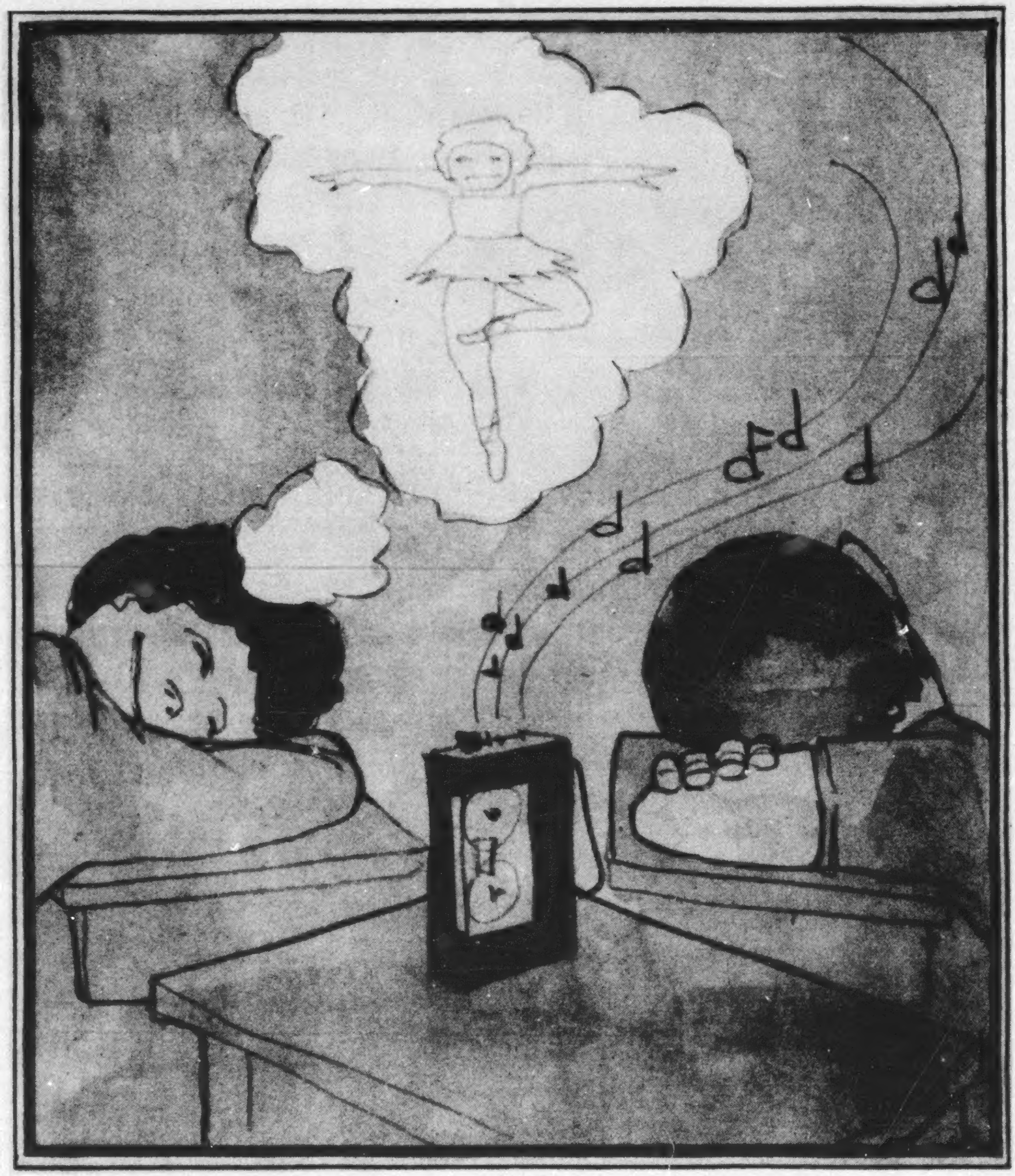

Bread making at 1 P.M.

Book reports're pure poison to some people! When I've had sick students out for a week or more, I've asked them to review TV shows. Some results have been great, some not-so-hot, but all reviews were completed. One fellow reviewed an afternoon soap for the entire 6 weeks he was housebound, and then decided to do a comparison with another soap. He really did a fine job, and complained bitterly when he returned to school because he was missing "my soaps". The class was enthusiastic about his reviews. and was anxious for a few sick days so it, too, could get caught up in the world of soaps. Other kids asked if they could review TV specials...they could, and did and when the reviews were posted for the class to read, some fine discussions ensued.

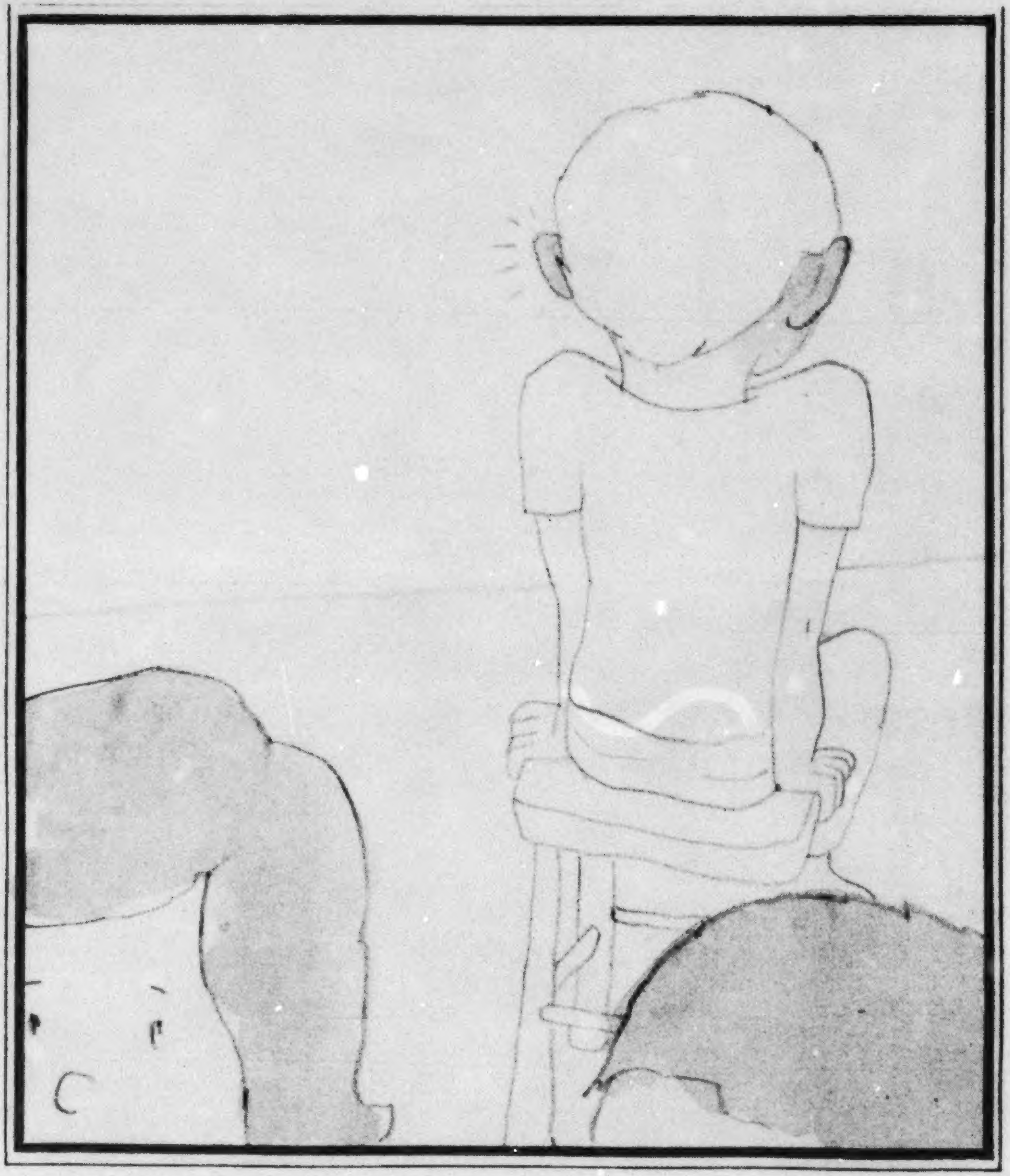
Occasionally someone reviews a movie or a sporting event. All reviews are posted, and comments from the other kids fly.


What are you doing up there, Ellie?
Homework, Ma.

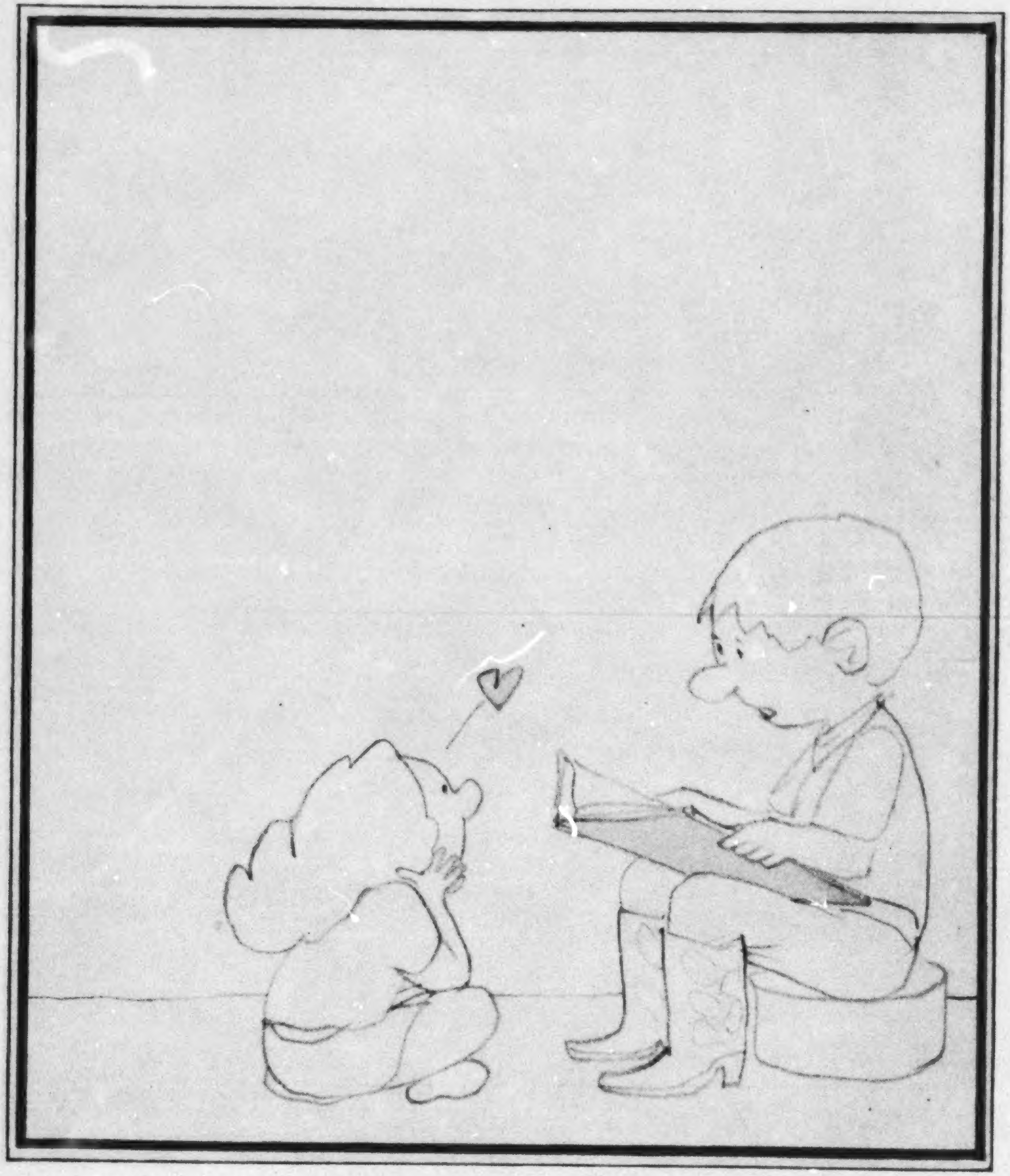
Playing cassettes of classical music during quiet times is a nice way of introducing the classics. Once, while ''New World Symphony'' was playing, a child said, ''That sounds like Indian music''. And after hearing the name Prokofiev, a boy said, ''Isn't he the one who did ''Peter and the Wolf?''



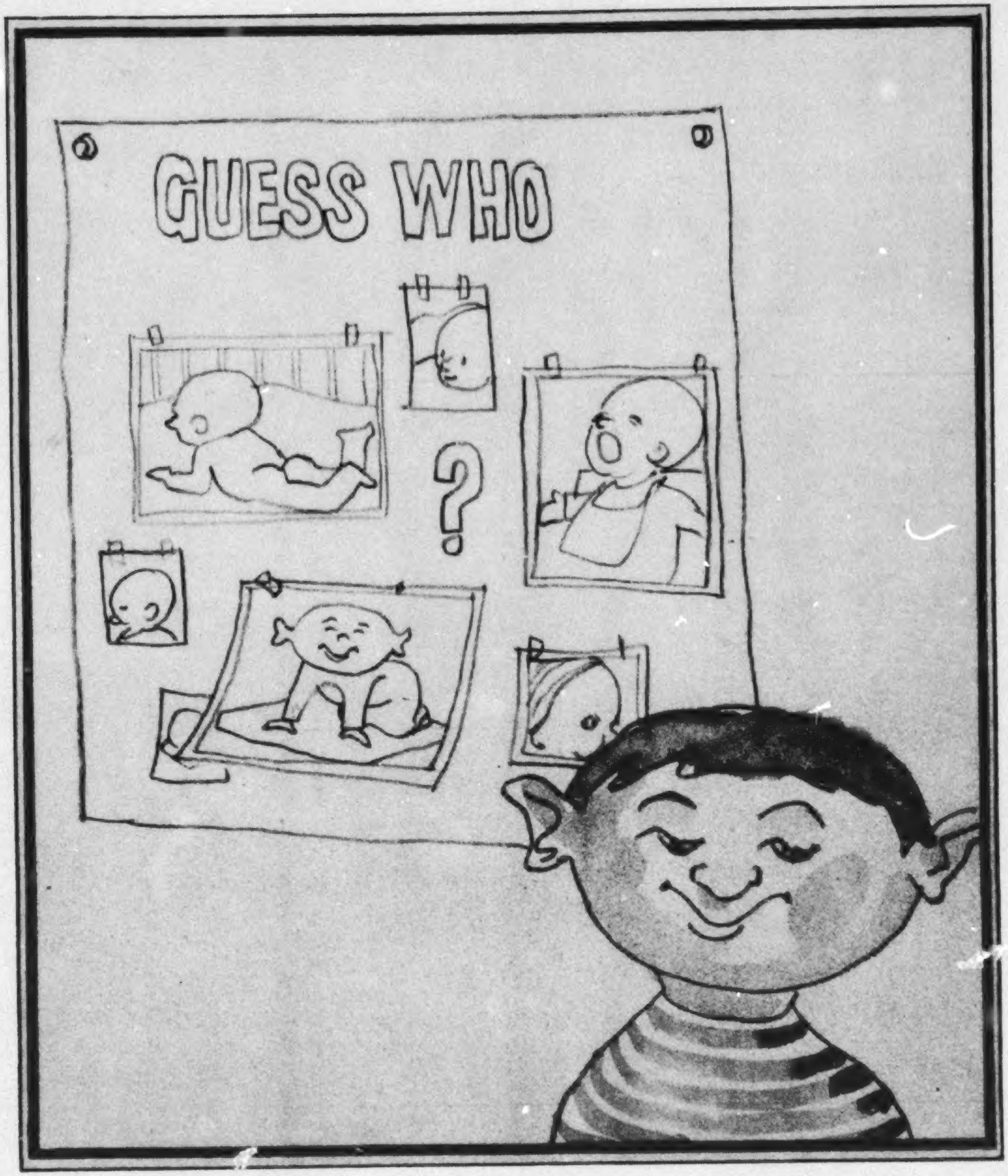
Few kids have encountered death. It is indeed one of our tabu subjects. It is, very frightening for a child, but well worth exploring in a straightforward way. Start by asking, "Who's ever had a pet that died?" and then progress to "Who's ever known a person who died?". One first grader was evidently listening to such a discussion, because his ears turned red, although he did not turn around to take part in the discussion. After listening to several classmates talking about pets and neighbors, he suddenly turned and blurted, "Our baby died". The teacher asked him to tell about it, and he did. His brother, just a few months old, was a victim of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) and the boy had found him dead in his crib. This had happened five months before the discussion, and the boy had never talked about it to anyone, including his parents, who did not know how to bring up a discussion with him.



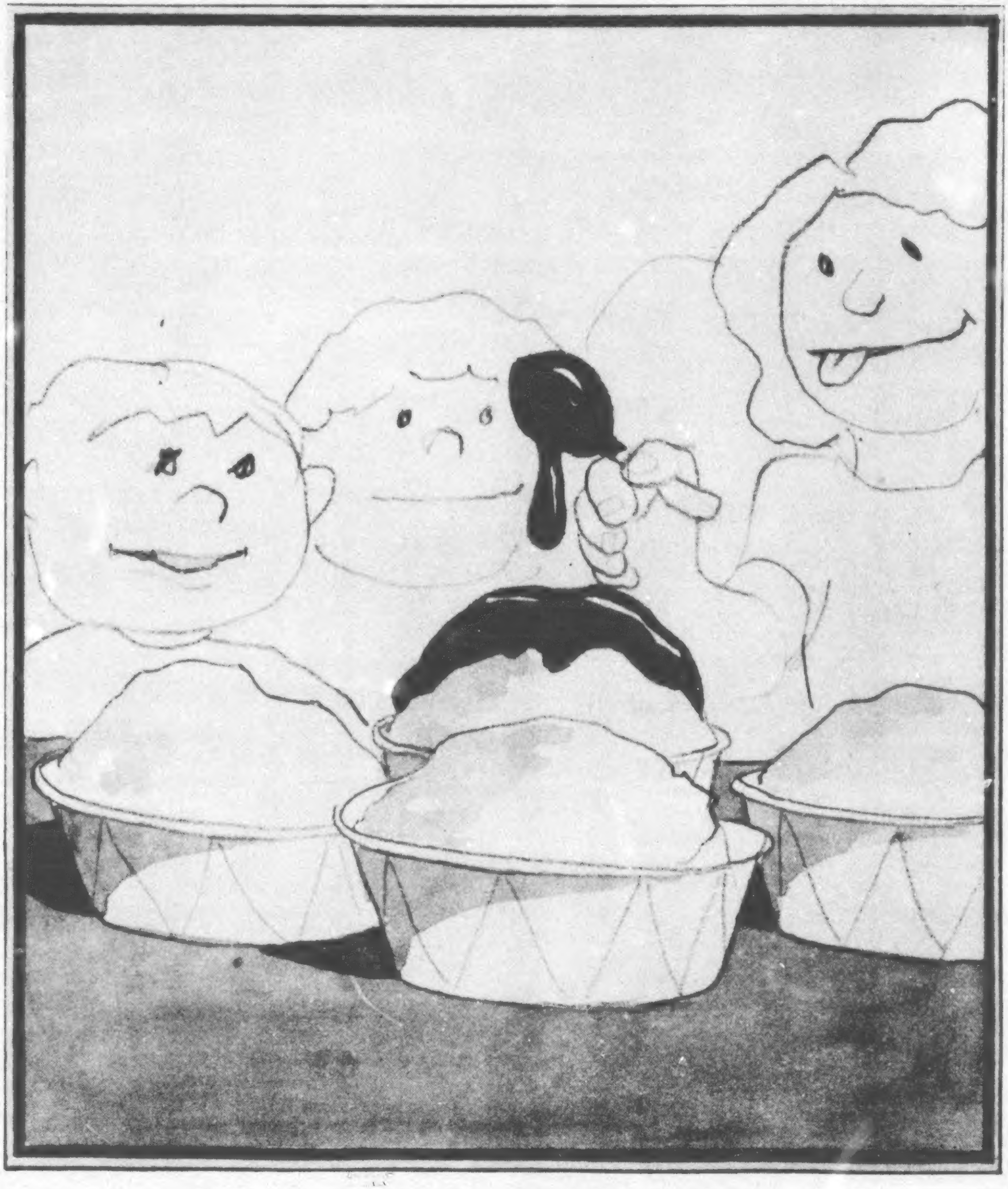
The half hour set aside each week, during which the 3rd graders read to the kindergarteners, is fun for both. The Kgn kid chooses the book he wants read to himself and brings it to his **READING BUDDY.** What fun for all is involved! Good oral readers are rare in 3rd grade, but having the time to read to just **ONE** child does great things for the ego of the older one and gives the little feller a chance to have a big friend in the school.



"GUESS WHO THIS IS", a bulletin board, features baby photos of some class members. Ask each kid to bring in photos in an envelope, and make sure he doesn't show them to anyone in the class. Feature a few each week, and take votes on who looks like whom.


GUESS WHO
?

Many schools have just a half day on the last day. If you can, have a late morning ice-cream party. You'll need 2 half gallons of ice cream, probably vanilla, 3 kinds of topping, 5 oz. paper cups, disposable plastic spoons, napkins. Try to have the ice cream slightly soft, and **YOU** spoon it into cups. Then allow the kids to come up, one at a time, to dress the top of the ice cream with the toppings they want. It might be a fine idea to take a vote earlier in the week as to what kinds of topping people want, so that you don't run short. And keep an eye on quantity. A piggy kid can pour half-a-can of chocolate syrup in mere seconds, so take off the whole top and use a spoon for serving. Don't allow pouring at all. This type of party is great after the entire room is finished, all desks are cleaned out, all books are away, and you have enough energy left to spoon out the ice cream. Eating it outside, in the shade under a tree, is even nicer, and keeps most of the sticky out, too.



During the **LAST WEEK** of school:

Re-do GUINNESS Book of class records (see p. 28)

Hand back poems (see p. 70)

Hand back daily journal (see p. 26)

Hand back autobiography (see p. 26)

Hand back autobiography (see p. 36)

Don't forget to measure for the last time, and chart the results (see p. 16)

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I can't wait to try some of these on my students.
Mary Haynes

Just the thing for the new teacher.
Dave Gibson

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Ann Lieber

We can use a lot of these ideas at home with our own children.
Catherine and Gerry Brown

When the media discover this book you're going to have a best-seller on your hands.
Douglas Wilcock

Pat Horne Syvanen started teaching a group of neighborhood children when she was five, and had regular classes every summer by the time she was eight. Her teaching career has ranged from nursery school to adult education and included courses in English, Social Studies, Math, Language, Music, and Crafts. She has taught in public schools and private schools, and worked for several years at the well-known Evergreen School for Gifted Children in Seattle, Washington. Most recently she has taught English as a secnod language to Vietnamese children. She and her husband Bob and their four children now live on Cape Cod.

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